

WINTER SCHOOL ON RECENT ADVANCES IN FORAGE PRODUCTION ON DEGRADED LANDS : AN EVALUATION

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In India 175 m ha of 329 m ha geographical area are degraded one or other way and about 6600 m t of soils are displaced and carried to oceans annually. In the country, the area under fodder crops has not been exceeding five percent of the cultivated area in the past three decades. This situation invites our attention towards the degraded land with problem soils where fodder can be produced to meet the growing demands.

Human resource is the most precious resource for any country. It is however not the numerical but qualitative strength of people that forages a country ahead towards progress and prosperity. Development of human resources brings about of the important means for the development of human resources. In view of this Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute (IGFRI) as pioneer in the area of forage production on degraded lands has contributed much in the past three decades. IGFRI, Jhansi is sincerely engaged in transferring the latest scientific know how and technologies primarily regarding round the year fodder production & pasture development on degraded lands. In order to expose the professionals to the area of forage production, a (30 day) winter school on Recent advance in forage production on degraded lands was organized by the Crop Production Division of IGFRI, The effectiveness of such training program (winter school) can not be sustained unless and until the impact is investigated accurately and scientifically. Keeping in view, the present study was planned to find out its impact with the following objectives.

1. To analysis the socio-personal characteristics of the participants of winter school.

2. To find out the knowledge gain of the participants from winter school.
3. To assess the level of satisfaction as perceived by the participants.

METHODOLOGY

All the 25 participants who participated in the winter school were selected for the present investigation. A pre-structured evaluation schedule was developed as per the objectives of the study and administered to the participants. In addition, a knowledge test was also administered to the participants before and after training program to assess the gain in knowledge. Participants' opinions about various aspects of winter school were sought at the end on a three-point continuum namely fully satisfied, partly satisfied and dissatisfied. The mean score, percentage, standard deviation and "t" values were worked out to draw inferences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the trainees—During the year 2001, one winter school of 30 days on 'Recent advances in forage production on degraded lands' was sponsored by the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), New Delhi and conducted at IGFRI, Jhansi. Where in 25 assistant/associate professors & scientists from 13 states of India had participated. The results in Table 1. indicate that majority of the participants were in the age group between 35 to 50 years having Ph.D. qualification with rural background and with a total service experiences between 10 to 20 years. This implies that the winter school was attended by the majority of professional having service experiences more

than 10 years with the academic qualification in doctor of philosophy.

Table 1. Distribution of participants on the basis of their socio-personal characteristics

Sl. No.	Character	Category	Frequency	%
1	Age	Below 35 years	8	32
		35 to 50 years	16	64
		Above 50 years	1	1
2	Education	Post Graduate	2	8
		Ph. D	23	92
3	Back ground	Rural	14	56
		Urban	11	44
4	Experiences	Below 10 years	7	28
		10 to 20 years	16	64
		Above 20 years	2	8
5	Organisation	Main Institute/ university	12	48
		Research station	13	52

Gain in Knowledge by the Participants—The information collected from the participants was analyzed to find out the gain in knowledge on various technologies related to forage production on degraded lands. The data presented in the fig. 1.

is clearly indicated that all the participants of winter school had gained knowledge from the training as each participants' post training knowledge score were found to be higher then their pre training knowledge score. The gain might be attributed to the fact that the training program had included the course content well suited to the trainees' job needs and the teaching method used might have created interest to learn more. This finding is in line with the findings of Mahipal and Prasad (1997).

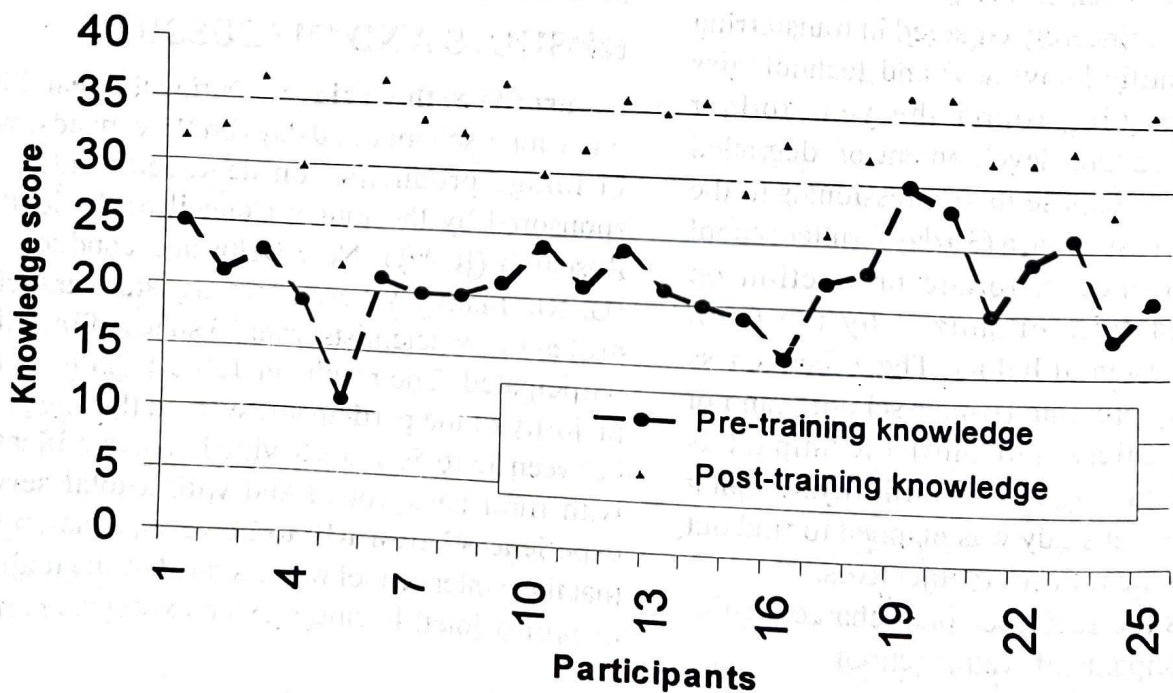
Further the information pertaining to the pre and post training knowledge scores were analyzed. The data presented in table 2. revealed that the

Table 2. Extent of Knowledge of the Participants

Sl. No.	Particulars	Mean knowledge score	Mean knowledge difference	t- value
1	Pre training score	21.52 (53.80)	11.24 (28.10)	15.8809**
2	Post-training score	32.7 (81.90)		

Figure in the parentheses indicates the percentage
** Significant at 1 per cent level of probability
Calculated 't' value=2.0638

Fig.-1 Pre and post training knowledge score of the participants



participants had significantly gained knowledge to the extent of 28.10 per cent over their pre training knowledge score. This increase in knowledge score was found statistically significant at the calculated 't' value (5.9909) at 1 percent level of probability. These findings get support from those of Anil Kumar et. al. (1994). Based of the above findings it could be concluded that the winter school conducted by the IGFR, Jhansi was effective in enhancing the level of knowledge regarding forage production on degraded lands.

Satisfaction Level of the Participants—In order to ascertain the level of satisfaction of the participants, the information was collected at the end of training program from all the participants. The training satisfaction includes the course contents, use of teaching aids, behaviour and style of teacher, laboratory facilities, practical and field visits, atmosphere to exchange the ideas with the faculty, general arrangements and duration of winter school.

The information so called was analyzed and

presented in table-3. Most of the participants were fully satisfied with the general arrangements (84%), course content (80%), practical and field visits (80%), laboratory facilities (68%) and atmosphere to exchange ideas freely with faculty (68%). While data regarding duration of training (i.e.30 days) was indicates that 44 per cent participants were dissatisfied. They were in the opinion that the duration of the training program should be 21 days only, as participants long absence from their working place may affect their research and teaching activities. However the data related to over all satisfaction level reveals that 63.50 per cent participant were fully satisfied with the training (winter school). This might be due to the fact that IGFR had a good faculty of scientists of different disciplines coupled with Research Farm and field projects which serves as "Live labs: to demonstrate the various forage production practices in actual field conditions. These findings is in the line of the findings of Singh and Tiwari (2000).

Table 3. Satisfaction Levels of the Participants

Sl. No.	Particulars	Fully satisfied	Partly satisfied	Dissatisfied
1	Course contents	20 (80)	5 (20)	-
2	Use of teaching aids	12 (48)	9 (36)	4 (16)
3	Behaviour and style of teacher	14 (56)	6 (24)	5 (20)
4	Atmosphere to exchange ideas freely with faculty	17 (68)	8 (32)	-
5	Laboratory facilities	17 (68)	8 (32)	-
6	Practical and field visits	20 (60)	5 (20)	-
7	General arrangements	21 (84)	4 (16)	-
8	Duration of winter school (30 days)	6 (24)	8 (32)	11 (44)
9	Over all	127 (63.50)	53 (26.50)	20 (10)

Figures in the parentheses indicates the percentage

CONCLUSION

It is concluded from the study that a well-designed training program based on the needs of the participants would result in gain in their knowledge substantially which ultimately lead to satisfaction. Hence, it is suggested that if training

programs are well planned based on the participants need and if provided congenial learning environment in the class room/practical/field visits coupled with training facilities will certainly lead to higher acquisition of knowledge and provide greater satisfaction to the participants.

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