TRAINING NEEDS OF KISAN MITRAS IN AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED AREAS

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ABSTRACT

Kisan mitras are the village level extension functionaries for the dissemination of improved technologies to the farmers. The capacity building of the kisan mitras for the rural transformation calls for the need based trainings so that they can perform their duties efficiently. This study was conducted to identify the training needs of kisan mitras in the field of agriculture and allied areas. Sixty kisan mitras from the three block viz. Bhojipura, Nawabganj and Faridpur were selected using the disproportionate stratified random sampling method and were personally interviewed on a three point continuum as most needed, needed and least needed. Frequency, percent and scores were used for the analysis and interpretations. The study revealed that the kisan mitras perceived, crop production and vermicomposting, public health and sanitation, seed production technology, medicinal plant growing, and farm equipment management, as the top five most-needed training areas in the agriculture and allied areas. Further in livestock, the kisan mitras gave preference to feeding, processing of milk and milk products, breeding of cattle and buffaloes, health care of animals and financial management, and feed conservation techniques. While in agriculture perticularly the most needed training areas were seed treatment, land preparation, irrigation management and training in sowing techniques. Along with this majority of the kisan mitras gave their choice regarding training duration, time of training and place of training as 1-3 days, in the kharif season and at IVRI respectively.

Key words: *Kisan mitras; Extension functionaries; Capacity building; Rural transformation; Need assessments*

INTRODUCTION

With the rapid growth in population, the demand for food is multiplying many fold. In this context there is an urgent need to address the issue of food supply to the common rural Indian. The ever decreasing average farm holding and the exhaustive use of the natural resources is leading to rapid degradation of the available natural resources. Soon after the T & V programme there were no VLWs at the village level for assisting the farmers in solving their problems and transfer of improved technologies to the farmers. In year 1998-99 Uttar Pradesh government introduced the kisan mitra programme for bringing the diversification and commercialization of farming through the introduction of improved technologies by the village level extension functionaries. The aim was to revolutionize the village productivity with a growth rate of 5.1 per cent in the next 10 years. To introduce advanced technologies for improving per unit productivity and efficient use of natural resources the state government has appointed educated progressive farmers as kisan mitra for every 5-6 panchyats. These kisan mitras are acting as the village level extension functionaries for rapid transfer of technologies for improving the productivity at the village level. As the new developmental programmes call for better, competent extension personnel especially at the grass root level, it is imperative to equip the kisan mitra with the latest technologies in farming and allied activities through training. Training helps not only in increasing ones skill but also in updating their knowledge. (Misra 1990). In designing any training programme for the kisan mitras, the need assessment is the first step and is a process of systematic identification of needs and problems of a specific target group (Smith et. al.1991). With this view the study was planned to ascertain the training needs of kisan mitras of Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh in various agricultural and allied activities.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh with a sample size of sixty-kisan mitra from the three blocks viz. Bhojipura, Nawabganj and Faridpur having 66, 86 and 65 kisan mitras, respectively. Following disproportionate stratified random sampling method, 20 kisan mitras from each of the three blocks were selected. Taking in to consideration the agro-ecological parameter of the district, 25 broad areas were selected and further minor areas of crop production and dairy production were identified. The perceived training needs of the kisan mitras were recorded on a three point continuum viz. most needed, needed and least needed with the scores of 3, 2 and 1 respectively by using the pretested structured interview schedule. Percentage, mean scores and average mean scores were analyzed for easy interpretation and presentation. The specific area having its mean greater or lesser than average mean score value was considered as more important and less important areas, respectively (Yadav, et al 2003).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Training needs of kisan mitras in agriculture and allied areas: The perceived training needs of the kisan mitras in the broader fields of agriculture and allied areas are presented in

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the Table 1. The training areas are classified as most needed, needed and least needed on the basis of their frequency; per cent and mean scores are analyzed for each sub areas among the 25 selected broad areas.

Table 1. Training needs of kisan mitras

S. No.	Area of training	Most needed		Needed		Least needed		Mean score
		Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent	
1	Agriculture	47	78.33	11	18.33	2	3.33	2.75
2	Dairy Farming	30	50.00	24	40.00	6	10.00	2.4
3	Poultry	11	18.33	14	23.33	35	58.33	1.6
4	Sheep Farming	4	6.66	14	23.33	42	70.00	1.36
5	Goat Farming	11	18.33	17	28.33	32	53.33	1.65
6	Fishery	11	18.33	13	21.00	36	60.00	1.58
7	Bee Keeping	11	18.33	15	25.00	34	56.66	1.61
8	Mushroom production	18	30.00	12	20.00	30	50.00	1.8
9	Pomology	20	33.33	23	38.33	17	28.33	2.05
10	Floriculture	20	33.33	23	38.33	17	28.33	2.05
11	Organic Farming	35	58.33	15	25.00	10	16.66	2.41
12	Vegetable cultivation	35	58.33	15	25.00	10	16.66	2.41
13	Soil conservation	30	50.00	19	31.66	11	18.33	2.31
14	Forestry conservation	16	26.66	23	38.33	21	35.00	1.91
15	Handicraft	7	11.66	20	33.33	33	55.00	1.73
16	Weaving	5	8.33	15	25.00	40	66.66	1.44
17	Pottery	3	5.00	7	11.66	50	83.33	1.25
18	Financial management	18	30.00	22	38.66	20	33.33	1.75
19	Public health	41	68.33	12	20.00	7	11.66	2.56
20	Vermicomposting	28	46.66	20	33.33	12	20.00	2.75
21	Farm equipment management	36	60.00	16	26.66	8	13.33	2.46
22	Horticulture	24	40.00	21	35.00	15	25.00	2.15
23	Medicinal plant cultivation	37	61.66	15	25.00	8	13.33	2.48
24	Cash crop production	37	61.66	12	20.00	11	18.33	2.43
25	Seed production technology	35	58.33	20	33.33	5	8.33	2.5
26	Average mean score							2.058

It is evident from the mean scores (Table 1) that the kisan mitras perceived the most needed training areas in order as crop production and vermicomposting (2.75), public health and sanitation (2.56), seed production technology (2.5), medicinal plant growing (2.48), farm equipment management (2.46), cultivation of cash crop (2.43), organic farming and vegetable cultivation (2.41), dairy farming (2.4), soil conservation (2.31), horticulture (2.15), and Pomology and floriculture (2.05). Further the kisan mitras also revealed the less needed training areas as, forest conservation (1.91), mushroom cultivation (1.8), financial management (1.75), handicraft (1.73), goat farming (1.65), bee keeping (1.61), poultry rearing (1.6), Fish farming (1.58), weaving (1.44), sheep rearing (1.36) and pottery making (1.25).

The studies conducted earlier by Joney Prasad and Santha Govind (2001) also indicates near similar results with respect to the training areas for the agriculture officers of Kanyakumari district of Kerala. Along with the traditional agricultural system the kisan mitras are also targeting the newer areas like the vermicomposting, public health and sanitation, medicinal crop farming, organic farming, vegetable cultivation,

pomology and floriculture. This clearly indicates the inclination of the farming community towards the diversification and sustainable development in the field of agriculture. Further the adjoining market like Dehradun in Uttaranchal for the organic products is acting as an important motivational factor for taking up the organic crops and livestock by the farmers. *Training needs of Kisan Mitra in Animal Husbandry:* Livestock largely substantiate the farming as the subsidiary enterprise for the farmers and acts as the safety valve in the modern farming system. The success of animal husbandry lies in the efficient use of the available natural resources and this necessary calls for the training in these areas. The training needs of kisan mitras identified through study are presented in Table 2.

It could be also inferred from Table 2 that the kisan mitras indicated the mostly needed training areas in the field of dairy farming in order of preference are feeding (2.66), processing of milk and milk products (2.5), breeding of cattle and buffaloes (2.47), health care of animals and financial management (2.4), and feed conservation techniques (2.35). Similar results were also reported by Prasad (1992) in a study with the farmers of

Table 2. Training needs of kisan mitras in animal husbandry

S. No.	Area of training	Most needed		Needed		Least needed		Mean score
		No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	
1	Feeding	43	71.66	14	23.33	3	5.00	2.66
2	Breeding	30	50.00	21	35.00	8	13.33	2.47
3	Management	26	43.33	20	33.33	14	23.33	2.2
4	Health management	33	55.00	18	30.00	9	15.00	2.4
5	Animal production	21	35.00	26	43.33	13	21.66	2.13
6	Processing	37	61.66	16	26.66	7	11.66	2.5
7	Marketing	14	23.33	22	36.66	24	40.00	1.83
8	Financial management	31	51.66	22	36.66	7	11.66	2.4
9	Feed conservation	31	51.66	19	31.66	10	16.66	2.35
10	Urea treatment	19	31.66	24	40.00	17	28.33	2.03
11	AI	22	36.66	27	45.00	11	18.33	2.18
12	Paravet training	16	26.66	23	38.33	21	35.00	1.91
13	Average mean score							2.25

Hamirpur district of Uttar Pradesh which revealed their perceived training needs in descending order were feeding, breeding, fodder production, health care and management. However in Lucknow district of same state Nishi (1996) reported the maximum extent of training needs in feeding and minimum extent in breeding.

At the same time they also indicated the requirement of training in management of new born calves, artificial insemination, improved animal production technologies, urea treatment, paravet training and marketing of milk and other animal products. These findings are in line with those of Show (1998) who reported that A.I., feeding of pregnant and milch animal, care at calving and silage/ hay making practices were perceived as the most important training areas by the dairy farmers in Burdwan district of West Bengal. The finding such as the least needed training areas being marketing (40 %) and paravet training (35 %) suggests the government effort in providing these facilities at villages level and thereby ensuring the efforts in dairy development. The fact that feeding, breeding, health care and management which are considered as importance of successful dairy farming as most needed training areas.

Training needs of Kisan Mitra in Agriculture: The findings put forth that the most needed training areas are seed treatment (2.7%), land preparation (2.56%), irrigation management (2.55%) and training in sowing techniques (2.46%). However they also perceived integrated nutrient management, marketing, integrated pest management, integrated weed management and storage and financial management as least needed training areas. Interestingly the areas like storage management (26 Per cent), financial management (26 %), marketing (23 Per cent) and integrated weed management (23 %) were reported among the least needed training areas. This clearly indicates the gap in the knowledge regarding the financial and marketing forces operating in this competitive world market scenario in the context of WTO and export potentialities in the agriculture sector. On the same line a survey of 120 young farmers from Raipur district of Madhya Pradesh by Prabhat Kumar, et al (1998) indicated the need for training in plant protection, improved varieties of crop, and water management and irrigation regarding crop production. Similar findings were also reported by Kirar, et al (2004) from the study of tribal farmers of Bastar district of Chattishgarh where the tribal cultivators preferred training needs mainly focused on plant protection and use of improved varieties, weed control, nursery raising, and manure and fertilizers as most essential followed by seed treatment, land reclamation, interculture operation, storage, field preparation, water management, time of seed sowing, harvesting, marketing, soil testing and farm machinery and implements were of least importance (Table 3).

Table 3. Training needs of kisan mitras in agriculture

S. No.	Area of training	Most needed		Needed		Least needed		Mean score
		No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	
1	Land Preparation	42	70.00	10	16.66	8	13.33	2.56
2	Seed treatment	47	78.33	8	13.33	5	8.33	2.7
3	Sowing Technique	35	58.33	18	30.00	7	11.66	2.46
4	Irrigation	42	70.00	9	15.00	9	15.00	2.55
5	Fertilizer	25	41.66	27	45.00	8	13.33	2.28
6	IPM/INM	24	40.00	24	40.00	12	20.22	2.2
7	IWM	22	38.66	24	40.00	14	23.33	2.13
8	Storage Management	22	38.66	22	38.66	16	26.66	2.1
9	Marketing	28	46.66	18	30.00	14	23.33	2.23
10	Financial Management	22	38.66	22	38.66	16	26.66	2.1
11	Average mean score							2.33

Duration, Time and Place of Training: The perceived training duration, time of training and place of training gives an insight in to the selection of time, duration and place of training for the kisan mitras. It is important to conside these factors as it affects the very aim of organizing the training and proves to be vital for the success of training.

Table 4. Duration, time and place of training

S.No.	Area of Training	Frequency	Percentage
(A)	*Training Duration*		
1	1-3 days	22	38.66
2	4-7 days	16	26.66
3	7-15 days	16	26.66
4	>15 days	06	10.00
(B)	*Time of Training*		
1	Rabi	16	26.66
2	Kharif	36	60.00
3	Zaid	08	13.34
(C)	*Place of Training*		
1	BDO Office	18	30.00
2	Vikas Bhavan	03	05.00
3	IVRI	32	53.34
4	State capital	02	03.33
5	Bilva farm	05	08.33

Duration of Training: It is evident from the Table 4 that majority of the kisan mitra (38.66 %) were willing for the short course of 1-3 days, followed by each (26.66 %) for 4-7 days, and 7-15 days and a mere 10 per cent for more than 15 days. This could be due to the fact that kisan mitras are progressive farmers and they hardly get enough spare time out of farm and rural development activities. Similar results were also reported by Shreeshailaja and Veerbhadraiah (1993), Om Prakash (1988) and Sawant and Dalvi (1989) revealing that most of the respondents preferred training, with a short duration of 3-4 days.

Time of Training: Further it is clear from the same Table that maximum kisan mitras (60.00 %) opined for Kharif season for training followed by Rabi (26.66 %) and Jayad (13.34 %). This could be due to the fact that after sowing in kharif there is some time available before the next farm operations to begin. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Roy (1972) and Om Prakash (1988).

Place of Training: With respect to the place of training most (53.34 Per cent) of them suggested their preference for IVRI for training, followed by BDO Office (30.00 Per cent), Bilva farm (08.33 Per cent), Vikas Bhavan (05.00 Per cent) and State capital (03.33 Per cent). It clearly indicates their paramount faith in the technical competence and infrastructural facilities of IVRI in training the farmers over the years as against the village based training preferences reported by authors like Roy (1972), Malik (1990), Mathiyalagan (1996) and Shailaja and Reddy (1997).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings it cold be concluded that the majority of the kisan mitras perceived that most needed training areas in the agriculture and allied field are crop production and vermicomposting, public health and sanitation, seed production technology, medicinal plant growing, and farm equipment management. While in the minor fields like livestock rearing feeding, processing of milk and milk products, breeding of cattle and buffaloes, health care of animals and financial management, and feed conservation techniques were sought in the area. However, particularly in agriculture; the most needed training areas were seed treatment, land preparation, irrigation management and training in sowing techniques. These aspacts may be considered as priority areas for imparting trainings to the kisan mitras towards upgrading their knowledge and skill in the field of agriculture.

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