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SKILL ORIENTED TRAINING NEEDS OF AGRICULTURAL OFFICERS UNDER TAMIL NADU AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (TNADP)

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ABSTRACT

Assessing the skill oriented training needs of trainees is very important for success of training programme. The Agricultural Officers wanted skill oriented training in the following areas like preparation and use of audio visual aids, extension teaching methods, processing of the products of commercial crops, post harvest technology, integrated farming system, seed production technologies for various crops and use of bio-pesticides.

KEY WORDS: Skill, Training needs, Agricultural Officers.

Training has become a high profile and high investment enterprise in the agriculture sector in India. Training is the process of assisting a person for enhancing one's efficiency and effectiveness at work by improving and updating his professional knowledge by developing skills relevant to his work and cultivating appropriate behaviour attitude towards work and people. Hence training is considered to be a vital component and continuing activities of many change agencies. The efficient training programme is therefore one of the essential requirements for an effective organisation. Tamil Nadu Agricultural Development Project (TNADP) was launched by Tamil Nadu Government in the year 1991. Introduction of integrated watershed development, improvement of seed production, livestock development, forestry, strengthening the co-ordination and monitoring capabilities and improving the quality and cost effectiveness of the extension service and above all formulation and transfer of a package of agriculture and related enterprises are some of the major components contemplated in the world bank supported TNADP. Assessing the skill oriented training needs is one of the crucial step for success and effectiveness of training programme. Keeping this in view, this present study was carried out with the objective of assessing the skill oriented training needs of Agricultural Officers in major subject matter areas under TNADP.

METHODOLOGY

The sample unit selected for this study consists of Agricultural Officers of the six agroclimatic zones who are working under Tamil Nadu Agricultural Development Project. The samples were drawn by proportionate sampling method from six agroclimatic zones. To assess the training needs in skill level, judges opinion were obtained from AOs and a list of subject matter areas were given in six major sub headings. A well structured and pretested questionnaire was prepared. These questionnaires were mailed to 120 respondents. Ultimately those filled questionnaires received from 74 respondents were subjected to statistical analysis. The respondents were asked to indicate the skill level aspects in which they required training against subject matter areas in a three point continuum, i.e., most needed with score of 3, needed with 2 and least needed with one score. All the scores of each major sub heading were added. From the total score obtained, mean score values were calculated. Based on the mean score value the subject matter areas were ranked.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Skill oriented training needs of Agricultural Officers in major subject matter areas.

The main objective of the present study was to identify the subject matter areas related to

agriculture and allied activities. The major subject matter areas have been divided into number of sub areas. These areas were ranked based on the values of mean score.

The major areas were farm and crop management aspects, agronomical aspects, allied enterprises and extension education. They occupied the first three places. The reasons were that these areas required more skill to be acquired by the change agents. The areas like crop husbandry and miscellaneous were ranked subsequently since those had been considered by the extension workers as next importance to the first three areas.

Extension Education

The major area includes seven sub areas. The training needs were assessed in skill level.

With respect to need to have skill on different spheres on extension education, it was found that they wanted to get them developed with skill in preparation and use of audio-visual aids, human relationship and extension teaching methods since these fetched first 3 ranks. Since the first three areas had been under constant changes because of scientific advancement, the AOs wanted to acquire newly developed skill. Next in command was programme planning and project formation followed by farm journalism, management, administration, supervision and monitoring and evaluation. This finding is in line with findings of Mani (1974).

Crop husbandry

This area includes II sub areas consisted of agricultural and horticultural crops. The training need in terms of skill were assessed.

It could be observed that, AO's wanted skill training in processing of the products of commercial crops, olericulture, oil and oilseeds, spices and condiments, plantation crops, forage crops and pomology. It is also evident that commercial crop was ranked first since the concerned products of commercial crops like turmeric, sugarcane, tobacco, cotton and fibre requred more skill to convert the products of crop into use product as end products. The respondents also suggested to have minimum skill in areas *viz.*, pulses, floriculture, medicinal plants, millets etc., This findings is in line with finding of Menon and Annamalai (1975).

Allied enterprises

The major area of allied enterprises are divided into 9 sub areas. The training needs were assessed in skill level.

It could be observed that, majority of the extension workers required more skill training in the area like apiculture, agro forestry, sericulture, dairying and poultry. They were found to be over and above the mean score value of 2.32. Rest of the areas were ranked in the order of pisciculture, goatery, aquaculture and piggery.

Agronomical aspects

The agronomical aspects of major area was divided into 8 sub areas. The training needs were assessed in terms of skill level.

It is evident that, AOs needed skill training in 4 areas out of 8 areas. The areas were land preparation, after cultivation, harvesting and post-harvest technologies. Why they expressed to have skill training was, that these areas were more skill oriented than others. For example, land preparation includes levelling, ploughing, bund forming etc., involved more skill oriented training. The mean score of the rest of the areas were less than the overall mean score.

Management activities

This area includes 8 sub areas. The training needs were assessed in terms of skill.

It may be observed that extension workers wanted their skill to be improved in the techniques of the subject matters like integrated farming system, biological control of pest and disease, integrated pest management and pest and disease management. How to prepare the products of these areas were largely skill oriented. Thus, the extension workers had exhibited the need for skill training.

Miscellaneous

This major area had been divided into 5 sub areas. The training needs were assessed.

It could be seen that majority of the extension workers wanted to acquire skill in the areas like seed production technologies for various crops, use of bio-pesticides and production and use of bio-fertilizers.

These areas were of complex in nature and thus they wanted to improve their ability in the preparation of different products of these areas.

Conclusion

It was concluded from the study that the Agricultural Officers gave primary preferences for skill oriented training in subject matter areas of farm and crop management aspects, agronomical aspects, allied enterprises and extension education, particularly in the following areas such as preparation and use of audio visual aids, extension teaching methods, processing of the products of commercial crops, olericulture, apiculture, land preparation, harvesting, post harvest technologies, integrated farming system, seed production technologies for various crop and use of bio-pesticides.

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ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF *Azolla microphylla* IN DIFFERENT NON-SUPPLEMENTED SOIL SERIES SAMPLES

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ABSTRACT

Among the different species of *Azolla*, *Azolla microphylla* performs well at this Cauvery Delta Zone (CDZ). An experiment initiated with an objective to assess the biomass production of *Azolla microphylla* in different soil series over weekly intervals revealed that the capacity of soil irrespective of soil series to buttress the growth of *A. microphylla* is only upto 23 weeks from the date of inoculation. Among the four soil series tested (Kalathur, Adhanur, Padugai and Alangudi), Kalathur series had supported higher biomass production owing to the medium P status.

KEY WORDS: *Azolla microphylla*, Biomass production, Soil series.

Azolla sp. a floating water fern helps in fixing the atmospheric Nitrogen through its symbiotic relationship with the alga *Anabaena azolla*. Nitrogen fixation and conservation by Azolla which is an ideal biological system for increasing rice grain yield under low-cost rice production technology has been well documented (Kannaiyan, 1987). Excretion of Ammonia in the water after its addition and its increase with the incorporation has been well studied (Lakshmanan *et al.*, 1997). Among the different species of *Azolla*, *Azolla microphylla* performs well in the CDZ due to its tolerance for higher temperature and relatively shorter multiplication period. Hence, a study was undertaken to assess the performance of *Azolla microphylla* in different soil series representing the CDZ and to find out the time upto which the soil can supply the native nutrients for economic biomass production without any external supplementation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The experiment for assessing the performance of *A. microphylla* was conducted in Randomized Block Design at Soil and Water Management Research Institute, Thanjavur during June 1995 to March 1996 in different soil series which are representing the Cauvery Delta Zone. Representative samples of Adhanur soil series was taken from H block of Tamil Nadu Rice Research