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Constraints Faced by Beneficiary Farmers in Proper Execution of ATMA Activities

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to identify the constraints faced by beneficiary farmers in the proper execution of Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) activities. A total of 200 ATMA beneficiary farmers were selected for the study, and data were collected through a structured interview schedule. The constraints were analyzed using frequency, percentage and rank. The findings revealed that delayed delivery of inputs for demonstrations was the most important constraint, reported by 77.50 per cent of the respondents and ranked first. It was followed by limited activities conducted in farm schools (75.00%), lack of coordination among stakeholders (67.50%), insufficient exposure visits to other states (60.00%) and tight farming schedules hindering participation (58.50%). Other constraints included frequent replacement of ATMA personnel (47.50%), bias in selection of exposure-visit participants (39.00%), lengthy procedures and documentation (37.00%), low technical efficiency of ATMA personnel (35.00%) and personal bias in award selection (25.00%). The study suggests that timely supply of demonstration inputs, strengthening of farm schools, better coordination among stakeholders, transparent selection procedures and farmer-friendly scheduling of activities are required to improve the effectiveness of ATMA.

Keywords: ATMA, Beneficiary Farmers, Constraints, Farm Schools, Exposure visits

Introduction

In order to fully utilize the technologies exhibited in the operational area, the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) advocates for an integrated strategy in which many stakeholders collaborate to plan, coordinate, and carry out the operations (Kumar et al., 2011) [5]. Therefore, in order to identify the issues facing the district's ATMA stakeholders, a critical examination of the coordination process is essential. A registered organization of important stakeholders, ATMA is in charge of distributing technology at the district level and engaging in related activities related to agriculture in order to promote sustainable development (MANAGE, 2007). It is therefore beneficial to understand the effects of its actions because it is a novel strategy for bringing important stakeholders together. The public extension system in India was operating at the state level by combining marketing, extension, and research efforts to develop and distribute technology to farmers. Extension reforms in India were first tested in 28 districts across seven states between 1998 and 2005. The Agricultural Technology Management Agency's "Support to State Extension Programs for Extension Reforms" program was introduced in 2005-06 as a result of this successful trial of Agricultural Technology and Management Agency. In 2010, it had a complete overhaul, expansion, and strengthening. The scheme's coverage was

expanded gradually. It is presently in use in 639 districts across India, and it is also suggested that the remaining rural areas be covered. Improving farmers' knowledge, abilities, and adoption of new agricultural technologies are all facilitated by agricultural extension. In order to increase cooperation between various organizations involved in agricultural development and strengthen agricultural extension, the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) was established as a decentralized, farmer-focused institutional framework. Farm schools, exposure visits, farmer training, demonstrations, and interactions between farmers and extension staff are all encouraged by ATMA. The successful execution of ATMA initiatives at the field level is just as important to their success as program planning. Farmers may encounter a number of challenges pertaining to delayed input availability, involvement, administrative processes, agency collaboration, and access to extension services. Finding these obstacles is crucial to enhancing program execution and guaranteeing that farmers receive the desired advantages.

As a result, the current study was conducted to determine and prioritize the main obstacles that ATMA beneficiary farmers must overcome in order to properly carry out ATMA activities.

Objective

To identify and rank the constraints faced by beneficiary farmers in the proper execution of ATMA activities.

Methodology

The study was conducted among 200 ATMA beneficiaries. Rajasthan beneficiary farmers' perceptions of ATMA's effectiveness. Sri Ganganagar and Bikaner. There are eighteen blocks in the districts of Bikaner and Sriganganagar. Nokha, Bikaner, Sriganganagar, and Sadulsahar are the four blocks that we chose. We selected five villages at random from each block. Ten responders were chosen at random from each hamlet. A total of 200 ATMA recipient farmers were chosen. Random sampling was employed to choose the respondents [Ex-Post facto research design was adopted]. A pre-tested, organized interview

schedule was used to gather data. A straightforward ranking method was used to gauge the issue that ATMA beneficiary farmers were facing. The respondents were asked to list the limitations they faced when using and engaging in ATMA activities. Frequency and percentage were used to assess the gathered data. The percentage of respondents who reported each constraint was used to rank the constraints. The percentage was computed as follows:

The percentage is calculated by dividing the total number of respondents by the number of respondents who reported the constraint.

Results and Discussion

The major constraints faced by ATMA beneficiary farmers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Constraints faced by ATMA beneficiary farmers in proper execution of ATMA activities (n = 200)

Sr.No	Constraints	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Lengthy procedures and documentation to access benefits	74	37.00	VIII
2	Tight farming schedules hinder participation	117	58.50	V
3	Frequent replacement of ATMA personnel at grassroots level	95	47.50	VI
4	Lack of coordination among stakeholders	135	67.50	III
5	Insufficient exposure visits to other states	120	60.00	IV
6	Delayed delivery of inputs for demonstrations	155	77.50	I
7	Personal bias in selection process for awards	50	25.00	X
8	Bias in selecting participants for out-of-state exposure visits	78	39.00	VII
9	Limited activities conducted in farm schools	150	75.00	II
10	Low technical efficiency of ATMA personnel	70	35.00	IX

The findings revealed that delayed delivery of inputs for demonstrations was the most serious constraint, reported by 155 respondents (77.50%) and ranked first. Timely availability of inputs is essential for conducting demonstrations at the appropriate crop stage. Delays may reduce the effectiveness of demonstrations and limit farmers' opportunities to observe improved technologies under field conditions. The second major constraint was limited activities conducted in farm schools, reported by 150 respondents (75.00%). Farm schools provide practical learning opportunities and facilitate interaction between farmers and extension personnel. Increasing the frequency and relevance of farm school activities may improve farmers' access to technical knowledge. Lack of coordination among stakeholders ranked third, with 135 respondents (67.50%). Since ATMA involves different departments, extension agencies, research institutions and farmer organizations, effective coordination is necessary for proper implementation of activities. Weak coordination may lead to delays and ineffective utilization of available resources. Insufficient exposure visits to other states was reported by 60.00 per cent of respondents and ranked fourth. Exposure visits can help farmers observe successful technologies and farming practices outside their locality. More opportunities, together with transparent selection procedures, could improve the usefulness of such activities.

The tight farming schedule was reported by 58.50 per cent of respondents and ranked fifth. Farmers may find it difficult to attend training and other programmes during peak agricultural operations. Therefore, extension activities should be planned according to farmers' seasonal work schedules. The remaining constraints were frequent replacement of

ATMA personnel (47.50%), bias in selection of exposure-visit participants (39.00%), lengthy procedures and documentation (37.00%), low technical efficiency of ATMA personnel (35.00%) and personal bias in award selection (25.00%), ranking sixth to tenth, respectively.

Overall, the findings indicate that the major problems were associated with timely delivery of services, adequacy of extension activities, coordination, participation and transparency. Similar concerns regarding timely input availability, farm schools and ATMA implementation have been reported in earlier studies (Kalsariya et al., 2017; Chouhan et al., 2013; Jagdeesh et al. 2020) ^[1, 3, 4] also observed problems related to timely availability of agricultural inputs and participation in farm schools. These findings indicate the importance of examining constraints from the farmers' perspective.

Major Findings

1. Delayed delivery of demonstration inputs was the highest-ranked constraint (77.50%).
2. Limited farm school activities ranked second (75.00%).
3. Lack of coordination among stakeholders ranked third (67.50%).
4. Insufficient out-of-state exposure visits ranked fourth (60.00%).
5. Tight farming schedules affecting participation ranked fifth (58.50%).
6. Personal bias in award selection was the least reported constraint (25.00%).

Conclusion

The study concluded that ATMA beneficiary farmers face

several constraints in the proper execution of ATMA activities, with delayed delivery of demonstration inputs emerging as the most important constraint. Limited farm school activities and lack of coordination among stakeholders were the next major problems. Timely supply of inputs, regular farm schools, improved coordination, increased exposure opportunities and farmer-friendly scheduling of extension activities are therefore recommended. Transparent selection procedures and continuous capacity building of ATMA personnel can further improve farmers' confidence and participation in ATMA programmes.

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