



Constraints Faced by the Participants in Farm Schools of West Garo Hills District, Meghalaya

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Abstract: The Farm School concept was recommended by the National Commission on Farmers, to be organized in the field of an outstanding farmer. Farm Schools has been started in Meghalaya, under ATMA. The present study was conducted in the West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya, considering that it is one of the first districts where Farm Schools have been set up. Rongram and Dalu Blocks were selected using purposive sampling.

The participants responded that they are not able to implement the technology taught in the Farm Schools due to its cost, some respondents do not find some teachings as profitable and so on. The constraints can be considered by the facilitators for improvement of the Farm Schools.

Keywords: constraints; farm school; improvement; participants.

1. Introduction

India has been dependent on agriculture for centuries. Even at present, it is a backbone of the Indian economy. The agriculture sector contributes 18% to India's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and provides 50% employment to the country's workforce (Madhusudhan, 2015). With the increase in technological advancement; extension programmes were initiated in India to disseminate the technology to the farmers. Post Independence extension programmes were developed. It was effective but it came with certain constraints. In 1990, after the introduction of Training and Visit (T & V), line departments were primarily focused on centrally funded inputs and subsidies, moreover, their staffs were increasingly accountable to the government and not the farmers. Most extension activities were dominated by Top-Down notch. Food Security that was emphasized during 1980s to 1990s made the extension system to be limited to staple food crops, which was dominated by Department of Agriculture. The other line departments had less or no programmes and limited staff, and failed to work in an integrated manner. There was need for decentralization. In order to decentralize decisions and work on district level, the National Agriculture Technology Project (NATP) established "ATMA" (Agricultural Technology Management Agency) under its component, the Innovations for Technology Dissemination (ITD) in 1998 with the support of the World Bank. These were first established in



pilot project villages in the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Punjab (**Singh *et. al*, 2009**).

The Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) is a registered body which disseminates technology to the farmers at a district level. It is a society of key stakeholders who are involved in agricultural activities aiming for sustainable development in districts of particular states. The key stakeholders of ATMA are Research and Extension units, the KVKs, line departments of agriculture, fisheries, etc. The ATMAs have linkage with research organizations, line departments, non-governmental organizations and agencies associated with agricultural development in the district. The ATMA staffs use the bottom-up planning methods and participatory approaches in developing programmes. The Farm School concept was recommended by the National Commission on Farmers, to be organized in the field of an outstanding farmer. On 15TH May, NATP suggested a guideline regarding setting up of Farm Schools in a workshop for revitalization of Agricultural Extension System (AES) (**Gardhariya, 2013**).

The features of farm schools are:

- Farm Schools operate at Block Level.
- The field of an outstanding farmer or achiever farmer or a progressive farmer is used for setting up the Farm Schools.
- The progressive farmers, extension functionaries, or experts belonging to Government or Non-Government Sector are the teachers in these Farm Schools.
- Front Line Demonstrations in one or several crops is one of the Farm Schools' main activities. The Front Line Demonstration is also done for other allied sector activities. Integrated Crop Management is focused on by the demonstrations.
- Technical training offered to the farmers, which are a season long.
- The students go to the Farm Schools according to the prepared schedules.
- Through trainings, the skills and knowledge of the teachers in Farm Schools would be upgraded. Knowledge of the students would also be upgraded through exposure visits, etc.
- Students share the responsibility of giving extension support to other farmers in their village.

Farm Schools has been started in Meghalaya, under ATMA. In the district of Meghalaya, it was started in West Garo Hills in the year 2017. Since then many farmers have been participating, there are 25 members in each main villages.



2. Research Methodology

The present study was conducted in the West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya, considering that it is one of the first districts where Farm Schools have been set up. West Garo Hills has 6 Community and Rural Development (C&RD) Blocks, viz. Rongram Development Block, Dadenggre Development Block, Dalu Development Block, Selsella Development Block, Tikrikilla Development Block, and Gambegre Development Block. Out of 6 blocks, 2 blocks, viz. Rongram and Dalu Blocks were selected using purposive sampling. There are several villages under the Rongram and Dalu Blocks, and 5 villages were selected from each using purposive sampling. Samingre, Asanang, Jendagre, Danang Bisa, and Chandigre were the selected villages from Rongram Block, likewise, Magupara, Marapara, Rimrangpara, Chandabhoi and Dalugaon were selected from Dalu Block. The participants were contacted with the help of the ATMA Farm School demonstrators and Agriculture Officer, and they were selected by random sampling. 6 participants were selected from each village. Interview schedules were utilized while conducting the research.

3. Results and Discussion

The 18.33 per cent of the participants responded that they are not able to implement the technology taught in the Farm Schools due to its cost (Rank I). The 16.66 per cent of the participants responded that number of days required for training is less (Rank II). The 13.33 per cent responded that teachers in the Farm Schools do not teach effectively (Rank III). 10 per cent of the respondents do not find some teachings as profitable (Rank IV). 12.5 per cent of the respondents cannot go to the Farm Schools every week because the timing is not suitable for them (Rank V). Gordhariya *et al.* (2013) and Gonshetwad *et al.* (2016) reported similar findings.

Table 1: Constraints faced by the participants in Farm Schools.

S. No	CONSTRAINTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	RANK
1	Some teachings are not considered to be profitable.	12	10	IV
2	Number of days required for training is less.	20	16.66	II
3	Participants cannot come to the Farm school every week, since the timing is not suitable.	10	12.5	V
4	Technology taught cannot be implemented properly due to its cost.	22	18.33	I
5	The teachers in the Farm schools do not teach effectively.	16	13.33	III



4. Suggestions given by participants

- i. The timing should be scheduled as required to make sure every participants can attend regularly.
- ii. If possible, the agriculture inputs should be given at subsidized rates.
- iii. Number of days for training should be increased.
- iv. Teaching methods should improve.
- v. The profit of a technology should be shown more.

5. Conclusion

The research intends to study the constraints faced by the participants. It has been found that some does not consider the technology introduced as profitable while some finds it costly to implement effectively. Some participants are facing difficulties in attending the Farm Schools regularly as they find the timing unsuitable to them. The number of days for training are said to be less and that teaching methods have to be improved. Future researchers may conduct a study regarding the effectiveness of Farm School and further regarding the constraints. The constraints can be considered by the facilitators for improvement of Farm Schools.

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