

Performance of Raitha Samparka Kendras in Davangere District of Karnataka

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Abstract

The study was conducted to assess the performance of Raitha Samparka Kendras (RSKs) of Davanagere District of Karnataka. Extension personnel and farmers constitute the sample for the study. The results regarding overall performance of RSKs reveal that 37.78 per cent of extension personnel indicated that RSKs had medium level of performance followed by equal (31.11%) percentage of extension personnel who indicated that RSKs had high and low level of performance. Less than half (40.00%) of the extension personnel indicated that there was a medium level of performance of RSKs with respect to infrastructure and other physical facilities, whereas 31.12 per cent and 28.88 per cent of extension personnel indicated low and high level of performance of RSKs. About 44.45 per cent of extension personnel indicated that RSKs had medium level of performance with regard to supply of critical inputs and customized services to farmers. A majority (86.66%) of extension personnel indicated that RSKs had medium level of performance on the planning for agricultural extension activities. With regard to formation of farmers groups 46.67 per cent of RSKs had medium level of performance. About 60.00 per cent of extension personnel indicated that RSKs had high level of performance with respect to follow up of extension activities. Less than half (42.22%) of farmers indicated that RSKs of Davangere district had medium level of performance on overall performance on different dimensions viz., dissemination of agricultural information, planning of extension activities, input supply and custom hiring services and follow up of extension activities.

Keywords: Raitha Samparka Kendras, Planning and Extension activities.

Introduction

In Karnataka the Raitha Samparka Kendras (RSKs) were positioned at hobli/block level and a separate office arrangement was established which was earlier confined only to taluka level. The staffing pattern of RSK consists of five Assistant

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Agricultural Officers (AAOs) and one Agricultural Officer (AOs) wherein the Agricultural Officer is placed at the headquarters and the rest are available for field work as and when needed by the farmers. There are 745 hoblis in Karnataka and all of them are covered under RSKs phase wise since 2000. Farmers can visit these RSKs personally and get the required information or they can contact the RSKs by phone to obtain the information. An interaction register is maintained in the RSK. The farmer's name, address and the purpose of visit are entered in the register.

Agriculture in Karnataka is in the process of modernization in many phases. Since then, many important developments have taken place in this process. It is expected that in the coming years, the farming community will gradually differentiate itself into two distinct categories. One will be a small segment of resource rich farmers moving towards commercialization aiming at domestic and export markets and another will be a large segment of small and marginal farmers, seeking low cost agriculture, which compels them to depend on public extension services. The necessity of high-level technology has also gained momentum in the recent years mainly because of World Trade Organization (WTO) and less profit among field crops. Therefore, the necessity of more competent persons with better qualifications at the grass root level is the growing concern and availability of critical inputs at the hobli/block level is another inadequacy that was observed in the existing system.

The structure and functioning down below taluka level is altered suitably to meet the mandate of RSKs. The objectives of Raita Samparka Kendras are (1) to provide updated information on crop production practices and crop production options and market trends, (2) to facilitate on site provision of agricultural inputs like fertilizers, plant protection chemicals, seeds *etc.*, (3) to facilitate on site provision of primary testing facilities like seed germination, soil tests *etc.*, (4) to provide the demonstration of both public and private seed materials and inputs at village level and (5) to provide a forum for interface with public and private technologies and inputs. In this back ground, to analyse the performance of RSK from extension personnel and farmers point of view, the present study was undertaken with the objective to assess the performance of Raitha Samparka Kendras.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Davangere district of Karnataka state. Ex-post facto research design was employed in the study, which is defined as a systematic empirical enquiry in which the researcher does not have direct control of independent variables because they have already occurred or because they are inherently not

manipuable (Kerlinger 1964). All the 24 RSKs in Davangere district were selected for the study. The study was conducted by involving two categories of respondents viz; Extension personnel and its clientele (farmers). The farmers who have direct contact with the RSK and are also getting agricultural extension services were considered for the study. Thirty farmers were randomly selected from each of three agro climate zones (viz, Zone-3, Zone-4 and Zone-7) of the district. Further, 45 extension personnel (Agriculture Officer and Assistant Agriculture Officer) working under RSK were also selected for the study. Thus the total sample size for the study was 145 consisting of 90 farmers and 45 extension personnel. The data was collected using structured interview schedule by personal interview method.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the overall performance of RSKs as indicated by extension personnel on different dimensions of activities carried out viz., Infrastructure and other physical facility, Supply of critical inputs and customized services, Planning of extension activities, Formation of farmers groups, Extension methods conducted for TOT, Transparency and accountability in implementation of programme and follow up of activities. The extension personnel indicated that 37.78 per cent of RSKs had medium level of performance followed by equal (31.11%) percentage indicating high and low level of performance. The RSKs have a lot of scope to perform better, by strengthening their technical staff and appointing non-technical staff and by timely supply of need based critical inputs and agricultural information. There was inadequate infrastructure and other physical facilities, staff which affects the performance on different activities of RSKs, supply of critical inputs and customized services and non availability of need based inputs to the farming community.

Table 1. Overall Performance of RSKs as indicated by Extension Personnel
(n=45)

Sl. No.	Category	No.	%	Mean	SD
1	Low	14	31.11		
2	Medium	17	37.78	149.67	38.72
3	High	14	31.11		

Table 2 reveals the performance of RSK with respect to various activities as indicated by extension personnel. It was clear that 40.00 per cent of the extension personnel indicated that there was adequate infrastructure and other physical facilities, whereas 31.12 per cent and 28.88 per cent of extension personnel indicated inadequate and more adequate infrastructure and physical facilities

respectively. This finding could be justified by the fact that the concept of RSKs was introduced during 2000 in Karnataka. One significant feature of RSK was that they were located at hobli level, with the establishment Office of the Agricultural Officer. The available infrastructure was only adequate and there is a great scope to strengthen the infrastructure facilities at RSKs like transportation facilities to RSK staff to visit farmers' fields, godown facility for storage of inputs, establishment of well-equipped Information Communication Technology Laboratory, staff quarters and training hall which may improve RSK performance.

It is evident that about 44.45 per cent of extension personnel indicated that RSKs had sufficient supply of critical inputs and customized services to farmers whereas an almost equal number of extension personnel indicated insufficient and more sufficient supply of critical inputs and customized services (26.67% and 28.88%) respectively. RSKs were having average supply of critical inputs to the farmers. The demand from the farmers for improved inputs like pesticides, fungicides, seeds, micronutrients and bio-fertilizers might be high hence, this might be the reason that the RSKs had sufficient supply of critical inputs and customized services like seed, soil, water testing facilities. The great majority (86.66%) of extension personnel had indicated that RSKs had average level of planning for agricultural extension activities followed by only few, 13.34 per cent who indicated poor level of planning of extension activities. This finding could be one of the important attributes for the success of RSKs performance. The RSK staff and their subordinates might have well planned for proper arrangements of events like field days, exhibition, timely display of information, site selection for conducting extension activities *etc.* to achieve their goals.

Regarding formation of farmers groups, the data revealed that, 46.67 per cent of extension personnel indicated that RSKs had medium level of performance followed by 35.50 per cent and 17.78 per cent indicating low and high level of performance respectively. Most of the RSKs had established few Self Help Groups, Farmers Interest Groups and Commodity Interest Groups under different schemes. Around 42.22 per cent of extension personnel indicated that RSKs had conducted extension methods systematically, followed by 33.33 per cent and 24.44 per cent who indicated less and more systematic respectively. It could be a fact that, the Government of Karnataka initiated Bhoochetana scheme, under which farmer facilitators are working in the RSKs on honorarium basis. They might have regularly conducted extension methods like field days, trainings, exhibitions,

demonstration and seasonal campaigns *etc.* The study revealed that more than half of extension personnel (53.34%) indicated that RSKs had average maintenance with respect to transparency and accountability in implementation of programmes followed by almost equal (22.22% and 24.44%) percentage who indicated poor and well maintained with respect to transparency and accountability. Under Right to Information Act, an individual can ask anything about the activities of the government organizations, hence government organizations are maintaining transparency and accountability in implementing the programmes and frequent auditing is done by the department officials and by the external auditors. Majority (60.00%) of extension personnel indicated that RSKs had more frequent follow up of extension activities followed by 40.00 per cent of RSKs who indicted less frequent follow up of extension activities. The success of any programme would depend on the follow up after completing activities like demonstrations, trainings, field days, exhibition and *etc.*, to overcome the lacunae during implementation of programmes / activities. This might be the possible reason that the RSKs had high level of performance.

Table 2. Performance of RSKs with respect to different activities as indicated by extension personnel (n=45)

Sl. No.	Activities	Category	No.	%	Mean	SD
1	Infrastructure and physical facilities	Inadequate	14	31.12	19.68	6.56
		Adequate	18	40.00		
		More adequate	13	28.88		
2	Supply of critical inputs and customized services	Insufficient	12	26.67	37.69	10.18
		Sufficient	20	44.45		
		More sufficient	13	28.88		
3	Planning	Poor	06	13.34	7.73	0.78
		Average	39	86.66		
		Excellent	0	0.00		
4	Formation of Farmers Group	Low	16	35.55	13.02	10.95
		Medium	21	46.67		
		High	08	17.78		
5	Extension Methods conducted for Transfer of Technology	Less systematic	15	33.33	56.87	18.31
		Systematic	19	42.22		
		More systematic	11	24.45		
6	Transparency and accountability in implementation of programmes	Poorly maintained	10	22.22	8.51	3.23
		Average maintained	24	53.34		
		Well maintained	11	24.44		
7	Follow up of extension activities	Less frequent	18	40.00	6.47	0.81
		Frequent	0	0.00		
		More frequent	27	60.00		

It is observed from Table 3 that 42.22 per cent of farmers indicated that RSKs had satisfactory level of performance whereas 31.11 per cent and 26.67 per cent indicated less satisfactory and more satisfactory level of performance respectively on overall performance of RSKs on different dimensions *viz.*, Dissemination of Agricultural Information, Planning of extension activities, Input supply and custom hiring services and follow up of extension activities. The possible reasons might be that the RSKs had sufficient supply of inputs during the season, creation of awareness/dissemination of agricultural information through group discussion meeting, participation in gram sabhas, public wall painting and writing and *etc.*, planning of extension activities, advance intimation of activities, proper arrangement of events, distribution of relevant literature, proper selection of beneficiaries and follow up of extension activities as indicated by the farmers.

Table 3. Overall Performance of RSKs as indicated by farmers

(n=90)

Sl. No.	Category	No.	%	Mean	SD
1	Less satisfaction	28	31.11	86.20	14.59
2	Satisfaction	38	42.22		
3	More satisfaction	24	26.67		

Table 4 reveals the Performance of RSKs with respect to different activities as indicated by farmers. The performance of RSKs with respect to dissemination of agricultural information indicates that majority (45.55%) of farmers revealed that RSKs had effective dissemination of agricultural information whereas 30.00 per cent and 24.45 per cent of RSKs indicated less and more effective dissemination of agricultural information. The possible reason might be that, under Bhoochetana scheme a lot of efforts might have been made to disseminate the information through wall painting and writings, field days, demonstration, seasonal campaigns and conducting training for the farmers *etc.* Regarding planning of extension activities majority (68.89%) indicated that RSKs had excellent level of performance whereas 18.89 per cent and 12.22 per cent of RSKs indicated average and poor level of performance respectively. This may be due to the fact that the available technical staff working in the RSKs and their subordinates were planning well in advance regarding supply of seeds, conducting seasonal trainings for the farmers, method demonstrations and other activities. It is noticed that 41.11 per cent of farmers indicated that the RSKs had sufficient supply of input and custom hiring service, followed by 32.22 per cent and 26.67 per cent who indicated that RSKs had insufficient and more sufficient supply of input and custom hiring service. Farmers

were getting the inputs such as seeds, pesticides, fungicides and organic manures timely. In addition to this farmers were also getting agricultural implements on subsidized rates. It is evident that half (50.00%) of the farmers indicated that RSKs were frequently carrying out follow up of extension activities followed by 42.22 per cent and 7.78 per cent who indicated more frequent and less frequent follow up respectively. Extension personnel are visiting farmers' fields continuously after completion of the programmes and building good rapport with the farmers. The Farmer Facilitators working under Bhoochetana programme were in contact with farmers regularly.

Table 4. Performance of RSKs with respect to different activities as indicated by farmers

(n=90)

Sl. No.	Activities	Category	No.	%	Mean	SD
1	Dissemination of Agricultural information	Less effective	27	30.00	39.36	11.44
		Effective	41	45.55		
		More effective	22	24.45		
2	Planning of extension activities	Poor	11	12.22	5.46	0.97
		Average	17	18.89		
		Excellent	62	68.89		
3	Input supply and custom hiring services	Insufficient	29	32.22	38.03	7.72
		Sufficient	37	41.11		
		More sufficient	24	26.67		
4	Follow up of extension activities	Less frequent	07	07.78	3.37	0.75
		Frequent	45	50.00		
		More frequent	38	42.22		

Conclusion

The overall performance of RSKs was found at medium level category. Hence, the components viz. infrastructure and physical facilities, supply of critical inputs and customized services, planning for agricultural extension activity, formation of farmer groups, extension method conducted for TOT, transparency and accountability in implementation of programmes and follow up of extension activities need to be strengthened for better functioning of RSKs. Appreciation of extension personnel working in RSKs through awards and certificates will motivate personnel to perform better. Hence the policy makers need to consider these aspects while planning and implementing the programmes.

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