

SATISFACTION LEVEL OF THE TRAINEES REGARDING THE TRAINING PROGRAMMES CONDUCTED BY NATIONAL RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (NRSP) FOR FARMING COMMUNITY IN RAWALPINDI

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the level of satisfaction of the trainees regarding the training programs conducted by NRSP for farming community in Rawalpindi region during 2006. The data for the study have been collected from 135 farmers who received training. The data included all age groups with different educational status. Highest mean of satisfaction by the trainees were: training objective (mean=2.59); contents of training (mean=2.58); methodology (mean=2.56) and relevance to the subjects (mean=2.56). According to data about the resource persons' abilities, the maximum mean is of "presentation skills" and "knowledge" which is 2.71 for both. 2.70 are the mean of "control over the situation" while "command over the situation" has mean 2.69. It is also depicted from the data that the trainings have increased the existing abilities of the respondents. The maximum means of the "knowledge gained", "skill gained", and "consultancy to community fellows" are 2.63, 2.59, and 2.43 respectively.

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan's economy has undergone considerable diversification over the years; agriculture sector is still the largest sector of the economy. It contributes to GDP at 23.3%, 42.1% of the total employed force and is the largest source of foreign exchange earnings by serving as the base sector for the country's major industries like textile and sugar. (Govt. of Pakistan, 2006).

Community participation for sustainable development has been a major concern of development professionals across the world. During the eighties, organizations of communities at the grassroots for mobilization of local resources and for the efficient and effective utilization of allocated resources has been shown to work exceedingly well in the region by programmers such as Agha Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP) and the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP), both in Pakistan. This approach to development has already been recognized world over.

Seen in perspective, it seems that the approach propagated by AKRSP and OPP is being adopted by many other organizations in Pakistan. AKRSP and OPP began work in 1982; a bilateral project set up in 1983 with German support in Baluchistan changed its philosophy and approach in 1986 after visiting AKRSP. It is now called Baluchistan Rural Support Program (BRSP). In NWFP, Sarhad Rural Support Corporation (SRSC) was set up in 1989, with the specific mandate of replication of AKRSP model. Several other bilateral projects all over the country and more recently, National Rural Support Program

(NRSP) was given a mandate to foster a network of grassroots institutions on the pattern of AKRSP. Initially, NRSP started its work in eight districts spread over Sind, Punjab, Baluchistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

In view of the encouraging results over the past several years, all major donors now insist on community participation as adopted by AKRSP and taken to scale by NRSP, for rural development programs. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the World Bank introduced this approach in the region as well as in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries. AKRSP and now NRSP's experience has built the confidence and converted many nonbelievers to accept that community participation is possible and can be beneficial. NRSP provides a unique example where the government has entrusted a non-governmental organization to foster a network of grassroots organization, to act as partners in development as a part of its own development strategy.

NRSP—Profile

Recognizing the importance of a development support organization, the Government of Pakistan provided seed capital as a grant to set up the NRSP in 1991. NRSP was registered as a not for profit company under section 42 of the companies ordinance, 1984.

The philosophy of NRSP is based on the assumption

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that there is a tremendous willingness in the people to help themselves. NRSP believes that people themselves cannot harness this willingness and they need social guidance to achieve this end. Social guidance is a process of organizing communities into viable social groups enhancing their capacity to expand their collective and individual resources base and enabling them to effectively utilize allocated resources. The process is incomplete without ensuring the availability of honest and motivated activists. A cadre of such activists at the village level is essential to optimize the effect of social guidance. The overall goal of the program is reduction of poverty and improvement in the quality of life of the rural peoples of the program area of NRSP. Objective is to faster a countywide network of grassroots level organization to enable rural communities to plan, implement and manage development activities and programs for the purpose of ensuring product employment, poverty alleviation and improvement in the quality of life through the strategy of harnessing people's potential to help them.

Natural Resource Management (NRM) section of NRSP works to help farming households to improve soil conditions, and to increase the area and productivity of arable land. New information and new technologies, disseminated through farmers' training in partnership with the provincial agricultural departments, help increase agricultural productivity and reduce losses.

NRM-section activities can be divided in to three categories; capacity building, demonstration and dissemination, and the development of linkages. Capacity building includes building infrastructure, providing credit to facilitate the purchase of inputs at the time of sowing or for purchase of livestock and skill enhancement through training. Training is offered in collaboration with government and private training institutes. In addition to these regular activities, NRSP also arranges farmers' field days before each crop season begins. In these field days the farmers, agricultural specialists hired by NRSP and line department staffs share their knowledge and experiences.

NRSP encourages well-known national and multi-national corporations to reach farmers directly through the community organizations. These organizations provide advice on the use of their products. For example, ICI and Welcome participate in the livestock vaccination and de-worming program.

Problem Statement

In this modern era of development, drastic changes are taking place globally. Old concepts are changing. Agricultural experts and professionals are now talking about zero tillage, micro-nutrients, environmental degradation, and conservation of natural resources, organic farming, laser technology, tissue culture, tunnel farming, etc. With the advancement of information technology, the world has become a global village. Similarly World Trade Organization (WTO) has come into picture. These new concepts may have serious implications for our agriculture because; we have to compete world market with free trade both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Our farmers have to produce agricultural commodities of very high quality to meet the international standards set out under WTO agreements. So to make our farmers competent and skilled, they need training because agricultural technology is constantly changing and farmers need to keep abreast of new technologies. NRM wing of NRSP has been continuously organizing trainings for the farmers with collaboration of Human Resources Development (HRD) and Institute of Rural Management (IRM) of NRSP. No doubt, NRSP has been investing considerable amount of funds, time and energy in conducting training for farmers, but how do farmers view their satisfaction about these training programs. The present study was designed to answer this question

Objectives

- i. To find out the satisfaction level of the respondents regarding trainings conducted by NRSP.
- ii. To compile the suggestions of respondents for the improvement of training programs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The farmers who have received training/s from NRSP in the field of agriculture, livestock and forestry, and were residing in the region of Rawalpindi constituted the population for this study. Cross sectional survey research design was used. A sample frame was constructed by enlisting all trainee farmers of this region. The list was compiled with the help of village leaders and other knowledgeable persons. A sample of 135 farmers was selected with the help of table developed by Fitzgibbon, et al (1987). The respondents were interviewed with the help of pre-tested and validated interview schedule. Simple random sampling technique was used for drawing respondents. The data was collected through personal interviews with the help of interview schedule and was analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and interpreted by using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Training develops individuals' capabilities for better performance in their job. It involves transfer of new knowledge, skills, behavior and attitude. It develops and maintains trainees' competencies to perform specific roles at their work places. It is that part of the professional field of adult education whose central focus is to improve role performance of the persons at a given time (NRSP, 1997).

Willingness to Attend Training

Willingness refers to desire to gain some thing. So, it was necessary to know the willingness of the respondents, whether they attended training on their own will. In this regard respondents were asked about their willingness to attend the training. Data revealed that all of the respondents attended training on their own will.

Awareness about Training Objectives

Awareness is the first step towards the adoption process (Mahmood, 2005). Awareness about training objectives means the knowledge about the objectives of the training. So, it was important to inquire the respondents about awareness of the training objectives. Data relevant to awareness of the respondents about the training objectives were collected which indicated that all the respondents were aware of the training objectives.

Satisfaction Level Regarding Training

Farmers were asked their satisfaction level, because it was felt necessary to evaluate the training program. The responses were rated on 3-point Likert Scale; 1= Not useful, 2= Useful and 3= Most useful. Data concerning these aspects is given in Table I.

Table I *Distribution of respondents according to their satisfaction level of training*

Nature of training	Rank	Mean	Std. Deviation
Training objective	1	2.59	0.494
Contents of training	2	2.58	0.496
Training methodology	3	2.56	0.498
Relevance to the subjects	4	2.56	0.498
Facilities during training	5	2.54	0.500
Deliverance of training	6	2.53	0.501
Place of training	7	2.48	0.545
Duration of training	8	2.39	0.599

Source = Field data

Table I shows that all the trainings received highest mean of satisfaction by the trainees were: training objective (mean=2.59); contents of training (mean=2.58); methodology (mean=2.56); relevance to the subjects (mean=2.56); facilities during training (mean=2.54); deliverance of training (mean=2.53); place of training (mean=2.48) and duration of training (mean=2.39). McGhee and Cheek (1990) also highlighted the adequacy of the course work was

above average to good in the professional studies, technical agriculture and agricultural education. Majority of the students were of the view that they would like to join agricultural and extension education again for their training.

Respondents were also asked about their satisfaction to resource persons. Data regarding this aspect is given in Table II.

Table II *Distribution of respondents according to their satisfaction about resource persons' abilities (N=135)*

Abilities	Rank	Mean	Std. Deviation
Presentation skills	1	2.71	0.454
Knowledge	2	2.71	0.454
Control over the situation	3	2.70	0.458
Command over the subjects	4	2.69	0.461
Attentive to all participants	5	2.67	0.470
Participants involvement	6	2.66	0.473
Followed up training	7	2.63	0.482
Innovative approach	8	2.51	0.501

Source = Field data

Table II indicates the abilities of resource persons who are the backbone and feeding engines of the trainings. They transfer skills and knowledge to the farming community. The satisfaction of the respondents about the resource persons' abilities is clear from the table. The maximum mean (2.71) is of

"presentation skills" and "knowledge". 2.70 is the mean of "control over the situation" while "command over the situation" has mean 2.69.

Respondents were then asked about their gain from the trainings. How much it remained helpful to their career. Data in this regard is given in Table III.

Table III *Distribution of respondents according to their overall gaining from training*

Abilities	Rank	Mean	Std. deviation
Knowledge gained	1	2.63	0.499
Skill gained	2	2.59	0.508
Consultancy to community fellows	3	2.43	0.554
Increase income/profit	4	2.33	0.501
Improvement in CO status	5	2.32	0.468
Improvement in area system	6	2.28	0.468
Decrease cost of protection	7	2.24	0.427
Participation in group action	8	2.23	0.503
Decrease cost of production	9	2.21	0.429
Improved livelihood	10	2.16	0.427
Provided employment opportunity	11	2.13	0.510
Helped in decision	12	2.10	0.465

Table III examines the overall gain of the farmers from the training conducted by the NRSP. It is also depicted from the data that the trainings have increased the existing abilities of the respondents. The maximum means of the “knowledge gained”, “skill gained”, and “consultancy to community fellows” are 2.63, 2.59, and 2.43, respectively.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All the farmers were not only aware of the trainings but they also attended the trainings on their own will. All the trainings received highest mean of satisfaction by the trainees. Majority of the respondents were of the view that they would like to join agricultural and extension education again for their training. They also showed great satisfaction over the resource person’s abilities. In this regard, the following recommendations were made.

- i. Training needs should be assessed.
- ii. Training duration should be maximized.
- iii. Honorarium should be provided.
- iv. Boarding/lodging should be provided.
- v. Competent resource persons should be managed.
- vi. Practical work should be maximized.
- vii. Participatory methods should be used.
- viii. Training should be arranged at field unit.

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