

Opinion of Contact Farmers on Rural Agricultural Work Experience Program

K. SHIVARAMU, A. D. RANGANATHA, H. C. SIDDU AND B. KRISHNAMURTHY

College of Agriculture, V. C. Farm, Mandya 571405, Karnataka, India
E-mail : shivaramuk@rediffmail.com

Abstract

As high as 53% of contact farmers opined RAWEP as useful and 24% as more useful. Increase in knowledge of crops/enterprises and skill in preparation of value added products were perceived as benefits of RAWEP by majority of contact farmers. Further, majority of contact farmers perceived that conduct of training program through power point presentation and videos, complete information on crops/enterprises, demonstrations at village level, training programs during evening, good rapport with farmers, students stay in villages, agricultural exhibition at village level and field visits to farmers field were the advantages of RAWEP compared to programs of developmental departments.

Key words : Opinion, Contact farmers, Rural Agricultural Work Experience Program.

Rural agricultural work experience program is a course introduced in all the agricultural universities of the country. This is viewed as the best opportunity, which can orient and equip the required potential among the students of agricultural sciences. It is a course organized by SAU's normally in the final semester of under graduate degree program. This course emphasizes on learning through experience. UAS Bangalore introduced RAWEP from 1995-96. It underwent several changes in the subsequent years based on the feedback from teachers, students and other stakeholders. Ultimately in 2002-03, UAS (B) introduced its new model of RAWEP. Under the program, nine farmers/farm women are allotted to every student as contact farmers. Each student has to collect data from their contact farmers using interview schedule. Based on the data collected, the students analyze the situation, identify the problems, develop plan of work, write a detailed report about the contact farmers and allotted villages in the stipulated period of one week. The students stay in the main village for four weeks and visit their allotted villages to conduct educational activities on different subject matter areas through various extension methods by using different teaching aids based on the plan of work. Students conducts krishi jatha, training programs, method demonstrations, general and group meetings, farm and home visits, agricultural exhibition, teach the

school children on agriculture and allied subjects and soil testing of contact farmers. The designated RAWEP teachers guide, supervise and evaluate the students following the time table. Keeping this in view a study was undertaken to assess the opinion of contact farmers on the usefulness of RAWEP and to identify the benefits of RAWEP as perceived by contact farmers, to ascertain the advantages of RAWEP compared to the programs of developmental departments as perceived by contact farmers; and to identify the limitations and suggestions of contact farmers to make RAWEP more effective.

Methods

The study was conducted during 2010 in Mandya district of Karnataka, India. The College of Agriculture, V. C. Farm, Mandya conducted RAWEP in Mangala and neighbouring villages during 2007-08 and Thalagavadi and neighboring villages during 2009-10 respectively. The list of contact farmers of RAWEP 2007-08 and 2009-10 was obtained. From such a list 85 contact farmers were personally interviewed using pre-tested interview schedule. The data were tabulated and analyzed using percentages.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 reveals that as high as 53% of contact

Table 1. Overall opinion of farmers on the usefulness of RAWEP.

	Opinion	No.	Per cent
1	More useful	20	23.53
2	Useful	45	52.94
3	To some extent useful	18	21.18
4	Not useful	2	2.35
	Total	85	100.00

farmers opined RAWEP as useful and 24% as more useful. On the contrary, only 2% opined it as not useful. There are no reported research studies on these aspects.

The possible reasons for having good opinion about RAWEP by the contact farmers may be due to good rapport with farmers by the students and teachers; and dissemination of complete information on crops/enterprises through training programs, demonstrations, field visits and exhibition at village level.

Table 2 shows that increase in knowledge of crops/enterprises and skill in preparation of value added products were perceived as benefits of RAWEP by majority of farmers. Lack of reported research on this aspect is observed. Use of power point presentation and videos, demonstration on the locally available and cheaper in gradients may be attributed to the findings of the present study.

Table 3 indicates that majority of contact farmers perceived conduct of training programs through power point presentation and videos, complete information on crops/enterprises, demonstrations at village level, training programs during evening, good rapport with farmers, students stay in villages, agricultural exhibition at village level and field visits to farmers field were as the advantages of RAWEP compared to programs of developmental departments. No

Table 2. Benefits of RAWEP as perceived by farmers.

	Benefits	No.	Per cent
1	Increase in knowledge on crops/enterprises	60	70.59
2	Skill in preparation of value added products	47	55.29
3	Increase in yield of crops/enterprises	24	28.23
4	Reduction in cost of cultivation of crops	18	21.18

Table 3. Advantages of RAWEP compared to programs of developmental departments as perceived by farmers.

	Advantages	No.	Per cent
1	Conduct of training programs through power point presentation and videos	64	75.29
2	Complete information on crops/enterprises	62	72.94
3	Demonstrations at village level	51	60.00
4	Training programs during evening	48	56.47
5	Good rapport with farmers	46	54.12
6	Students stay in villages	45	52.94
7	Agricultural exhibition at village level	44	51.76
8	Field visits to farmers field	43	50.59
9	Krishi Jatha	34	40.00
10	Soil testing	32	37.65
11	Teaching to school children's on agriculture and allied subjects	16	18.82

reported research study was available on the above aspects.

These findings may be due to the reason that the students and teachers stay in villages, which give them ample time to spend leisurely with farmers. This helped to develop good rapport with farmers, motivated the farmers to actively participate in all the activities of RAWEP and to consider RAWEP as their program.

Table 4. Limitations of RAWEP as perceived by contact farmers.

	Constraints	No.	Per cent
1	Power point presentation and videos are not used in all training programs	69	81.18
2	Less number of training programs	61	71.76
3	Less number of demonstrations	46	54.12
4	Use of more English words by students	44	51.76
5	More use of technical words by students	43	50.59
6	Conducting agricultural exhibition in limited space	24	28.23
7	Less publicity	22	25.88
8	Less effective presentation of technical information by students	19	22.35
9	Programmes timings not suitable to farmers/farm women	17	20.00
10	Under estimation of students competence by the farmers	15	17.65
11	Hesitation of farmers to learn from students	13	15.29
12	Failure to give soil test results	9	10.59

Table 5. Suggestions of contact farmers to make RAWEP more effective.

Suggestions	No.	Per cent
1 More use of power point presentation and videos in training programs	68	80.00
2 More number of training programs	59	69.41
3 More number of demonstrations	52	61.18
4 Enhance duration of village stay camp	50	58.82
5 Less use of English words by students	46	54.12
6 More use of common and vernacular terms by students	44	51.76
7 Less use of technical words by students	43	50.59
8 Follow up in the RAWEP villages once in 3—4 months	34	40.00
9 Give more publicity	31	36.47
10 More number of contact farmers per student	21	24.71
11 Organizing agricultural exhibition in all the RAWEP villages	19	22.35
12 Repeating RAWEP in the same village once in 4—5 years	12	14.12
13 Handing over of soil test results to farmers	8	9.41

Table 4 indicates that majority of contact farmers perceived power point presentation and videos were not used in all training programs, less number of training programmes, less number of demonstrations, use of more English words by students and more use of technical words by students as the limitations of RAWEP. The findings of the present study are in accordance with findings of Krishnamurthy (1) and

Sanjeev (2).

Table 5 shows that majority of contact farmers suggested for more use of power point presentation and videos in training programs, more number of demonstrations, enhance duration of village stay camp, less use of English words by students, more use of common and vernacular terms by students and less use of technical words by students to make RAWEP more effective. These findings are in line with the findings reported by Sanjeev (2).

Conclusion

Majority of contact farmers opined that RAWEP is useful and perceived power point presentation and videos were not used in all the training programmes, less number of demonstrations and training programmes, more use of more English and technical words by students as the limitations of RAWEP. Therefore, efforts are to be made to overcome all the above short comings to make RAWEP more meaningful and effective in achieving its objectives.

References

1. Krishnamurthy A. T. 1999. *A study on radio listening and televiewing behavior of farmers in Karnataka*. M.Sc. (Ag.) thesis. USA, Bangalore, India.
2. Sanjeev M. V. 2003. *An analysis of functioning of RAWEP at UAS, Bangalore and Kerala Agricultural University*. M.Sc. (Ag.) thesis. UAS, Bangalore, India.