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Ramappa Patil
Agricultural and Horticultural Research Station, Kathalagere, Karnataka, India

Maruthesh AM
Agricultural and Horticultural Research Station, Kathalagere, Karnataka, India

Manjunath B
Agricultural and Horticultural Research Station, Kathalagere, Karnataka, India

Jagadeesh GB
Agricultural and Horticultural Research Station, Kathalagere, Karnataka, India

Correspondence
Ramappa Patil
Agricultural and Horticultural Research Station, Kathalagere, Karnataka, India

Profile characteristics of extension personnel and clientele of Raitha Samparka Kendras

Ramappa Patil, Maruthesh AM, Manjunath B and Jagadeesh GB

Abstract
The present study was undertaken during the year 2013-14 in the Davangere district of Karnataka state. The district was selected purposively for the study because the district represents three agro climate zones. The ex-post-facto research design was used for the study. All the 24 Raitha Samparka Kendras in Davanagere district were purposively selected for the study. The data was collected from the 45 extension personnel and 90 farmers using structured interview schedule. The results of the study revealed that, Half (51.12%) of the extension personnel were in old age, having high working experience with average training. Majority of them were having medium level of awareness about use of ICT and majority of them had medium level of work load. With respect to farmer respondents, majority of the farmers were middle aged with medium level of education having big land holdings and with high income. Majority of them belonged to medium level of mass media participation, extension contact and extension participation. Major portion of them belonged to high level of scientific orientation, credit orientation and majority of them were belonged to medium level category with respect to information consultancy behavior, cosmopoliteness, material possession and farming experience.

Keywords: Credit orientation, extension personnel, ICT, scientific orientation, work load

Introduction
The aim of agricultural extension is to improve the farmer, not the farm and the purpose is to enhance learning among those who till the soil and tend the livestock of the world. Historically, the informal agricultural extension services started in India dates back to 1908 by some philanthropists (Dahama and Bhatnagar, 1982) [2]. Extension services have been viewed as public goods and financed by the public sector in most of the countries. Many organizations are involved in providing agricultural extension services to the farming in the country. India adopted several extension programmers from 1952 onwards to achieve rapid socio-economic development of rural communities the country has been experimenting with many strategies and approaches to agricultural development and in the past sponsored a number of Agricultural Development Programmes like Community Development Programme (CDP), Grow More Food Programme (GMFP),National Extension Service (NES), Intensive Agricultural Area Programme (IAAP), Intensive Agriculture Development Programme (IADP), High yield Varieties Programme (HYVP) and Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA).These programmes had a perceptible impact on overall agricultural development. However, the efforts were not replicated on a wider scale covering various categories of farmers in different areas.

Raitha Samparka Kendras established under Raitha Mithra Yojane during 2000 are the hobli level organization providing agricultural extension services to the farming community at the hobli level. The staffing pattern of RSKs consists of five Assistant Agricultural Officers (AAO's) and one Agricultural Officer (AO's) where in 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 with RSKs in phase wise since 2000. Farmers can visit these RSKs personally and get the required information or they can contact the RSKs over phone to obtain the information.

Not many studies have been conducted to know the personal, socio-economic and psychological related characteristics of extension personnel working in the Raitha Samparka Kendras and also the farmers visiting them. Hence, the present study was undertaken with an objective to know the profile characteristics of the extension personnel and beneficiary farmers.

Methodology
The study was conducted in the Davanagere district of Karnataka state during the year 2014. The district was selected purposively for the study because the district represents three agro

climate zones and there is no research studies carried out to evaluate performance of RSKs in the state or district. The ex-post-facto research design was used for the study. All the 24 Raitha Samparka Kendras in Davanagere district were purposively selected for the study. The farmers who have direct contact with the Raitha Samparka Kendras and also getting agricultural extension services and extension personnel working in the Raitha Samparka Kendras were selected as respondents for the study. For collecting data, 90 clientele respondents and 45 extension personnel were selected by following simple random sampling procedure technique. The data was collected from the respondents using structured and standardized interview schedule developed for the study. The data collected was tabulated and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools like frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation etc.

Results and discussion

Profile Characteristics of extension personnel

It is evident from Table 1 that, nearly half (51.12%) of the respondents were in old age category followed by young (35.55%) and middle (13.33%) age category. Further, majority (42.22%) of respondents had low level of education followed by 37.78 per cent and 20 per cent were in high and medium level of education respectively. The findings revealed that nearly half of the extension personnel were in old age category. The possible reason might be that, the majority of the extension personnel working in the RSKs were promoties as AAOs who were in verge of retirement. Further, it is witnessed that, majority (42.22%) of respondents had low level of education; the probable reason may be that the minimum qualification fixed for eligibility of the Agriculture Assistant was SSLC with agriculture training.

It is observed that 60.00 per cent of the respondents were in the high working experience category followed by 35.55 per cent and 4.45 percent in low and medium level working experience category respectively. This is because majority of the extension personnel were old aged and in the verge of retirement stage.

It could be observed that 40.00 per cent of the respondents had received average training followed by 33.33 per cent and 26.67 per cent had received less and more training respectively. The probable reasons might be that the extension personnel getting seasonal training at the district training centers.

It is also evident that 44.45 per cent of the respondents had medium level of awareness about use of ICT, followed by high (33.33%) and low (22.22%) level. The possible reason might be that, the newly recruited AAOs and AOs had a knowledge of using the ICT tools where as promoted AAOs do not have any knowledge about the use of ICTs except cell phones.

It is apparent that, more than half (60.00%) of extension personnel did not receive awards, where as 20.00 per cent of extension personnel received the awards and certificates. It is because there is poor recognition of efficient extension persons.

Table 1 also depicted the information regarding work load of the extension functionaries. The data indicated that, majority (44.44%) of extension personnel had medium level of work load, whereas 31.11 per cent of the respondents had low work load and 24.45 per cent of respondents had high work load. The probable reason might be that in a year they will get high work load during crop season as seed distribution, field visits and facing clientele problems and very less work during off season.

Table 1: Profile of extension personnel of RSKs (n=45)

Sl.	Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	Young	16	35.55
		Middle	06	13.33
		Old	23	51.12
			Mean: 45.58, SD:10.81	
2	Education	Low	19	42.22
		Medium	09	20.00
		High	17	37.78
			Mean: 3.56, SD: 2.23	
3	Working experience	Low	16	35.55
		Medium	02	04.45
		High	27	60.00
			Mean: 3.69, SD: 2.02	
4	Training received	Less	15	33.33
		Sufficient	18	40.00
		More	12	26.67
			Mean: 2.40, SD: 1.62	
5	Awareness about ICT	Low	20	44.45
		Medium	10	22.22
		High	15	33.33
			Mean: 7.33, SD: 2.24	
6	Awards and certificates	Received	09	20.00
		Not Received	36	80.00
7	Work load	Low	14	31.11
		Medium	20	44.44
		High	11	24.45
			Mean: 23.84, SD: 2.44	

Profile Characteristics of farmers

It was observed from Table 2 that 40 per cent of farmers were in middle age category followed by 34.44 per cent and 25.55 per cent of them were in young and old age category respectively. In general, the farmers of middle age are enthusiastic and have more work efficiency. Moreover, middle aged farmers have more family responsibility and sensibility. They also work with a sense of commitment and involvement. These might be the probable reasons for majority of the respondents to be found in the middle aged group followed by old age. The results were also reported by Sahana (2003) [4], Amaresh Kumar (2005) [1] and Shamna (2009) [5].

Majority (47.77%) of farmers had medium level of education followed by 32.22 per cent low and 20.00 per cent high level of education respectively. It is universal fact that education plays a key role in moulding and bringing desirable changes in human beings. Majority of the farmers were relatively educated, which could be the result of a common social environment. As the majority of them were able to gather knowledge on recent technologies. In the present scenario, almost everybody is found to be literate due to the awareness brought by the government on the importance of education and the efforts of the government and non – governmental agencies. These findings go in agreement with that of Vijay Kumar (2001) [7].

Further, it is observed that majority (70.00%) of the respondents were in high level of income group whereas only few 3.33 per cent and 26.67 per cent of farmers had low and medium level of annual income respectively. The farmers were coming under Bhadra command area had high land holding. This might be the possible reason for majority farmers fitting in the medium annual income category.

It could be observed that more than half (55.55%) of respondents were in the big farmers category whereas 42.22 per cent of them were in small farmers category and only few (2.22%) farmers were in the marginal farmers category. The probable reason could be that the occupation of almost 95 per cent of the respondents was agriculture. This finding gained the support from the findings of Kumar (1998) [3].

It was also evident that majority (47.77%) of respondents had medium level of mass media participation followed by 30.00 per cent and 22.22 per cent of them were in the low and high level of media participation respectively. More than 90 per cent of the respondents possessed TV sets. They were regular viewers of various mass media programmes, besides subscribing and reading the newspapers and magazines. These factors would be the possible reasons for most of them had medium level of mass media exposure. This finding is in agreement with that of Vedamurthy (2002) [6].

It can also be seen in Table 2 that equal (30.55%) percentage of farmers had medium and low level of social participation where as 24.44 per cent of them had high level of social participation. Majority of the respondents were having medium level of education and medium to high levels of extension participation, mass media participation and scientific orientation. All these characteristics would naturally enable the respondents to have high social participation. More number of farmers were frequently participating in the extension activities conducted by the agriculture department and agricultural university.

Further, a glance at the above table indicates that about 41.11 per cent of respondents had medium level of extension contact followed by 34.44 per cent and 24.44 per cent of them had low and high level of extension contact respectively. It is also noticed that 46.66 per cent of farmers had medium level of extension participation, whereas 27.77 per cent and 25.55 per cent of them had low and higher level of participation respectively. This trend might be due to the fact that, they were likely to be involved in field days, field visits, Krishimela and had medium level of education, which might have created awareness about the importance of extension contact. This could be the reason for their medium level of extension contact and extension participation.

Further, with regard to scientific orientation 37.77 per cent had high level of scientific orientation followed by low (33.33%) and medium (28.88%) respectively. The probable reasons may be that the farmers with the scientific orientation could be receptive to latest development in agriculture, facilitates employing the scientific methods in agriculture technologies and decision making.

The results also revealed that about 45.55 per cent of farmers had high level of credit orientation whereas 23.33 per cent and 31.11 per cent of them had medium and low level of credit orientation. The possible reason might be that in adoption of latest technology required the use of higher amount. Hence, this might have shown higher orientation towards credit.

It is observed that more than three fourth (76.66%) of farmers had medium cosmopoliteness, followed by almost equal 11.11 per cent and 12.22 per cent of them were in high and low categories respectively. The farmers were fairly good in their socio – economic status and they would travel frequently to nearby towns and cities for marketing the produce. Hence, the cosmopoliteness level was in the range of medium level.

It was also evident that majority (40.00%) of respondents had medium category with regard to information consultancy behavior followed by equal (30.00%) percentage of farmers were belong to high and low category. This might be due to the fact that, majority of respondents had medium level of education, medium level of cosmopoliteness, extension contact and extension participation.

Further, table 2 also depicted that information regarding cropping pattern followed by farmers, the data indicates that majority (64.44%) of farmers had double cropping pattern followed by single cropping pattern (35.55%). Now a day's agriculture has become a business and every farmer wants to earn more income from the land available and hence he cultivates maximum number of crops in the available land. These might be the probable reasons for the above findings.

The Table also indicates the respondents' material possession, nearly half (47.77%) of the farmers had medium level of material possession followed by 33.33 per cent and 18.88 per cent had low and high category respectively. With respect to farming experience, half (50.00%) of the respondents had medium farming experience whereas 13.83 per cent and 36.66 per cent of them were having low and high experience in farming respectively.

Table 2: Profile of farmers of Davanagere district (n=90)

Sl. No.	Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	Young	31	34.44
		Middle	36	40.00
		Old	23	25.55
			Mean: 48.67, SD: 10.62	
2	Education	Low	29	32.22
		Medium	43	47.77
		High	18	20.00
			Mean: 3.25, SD: 1.77	
3	Annual income	Low	03	03.33
		Medium	17	26.67
		High	70	70.00
4	Land holding	Marginal farmers	02	2.22
		Small Farmers	38	42.22
		Big Famers	50	55.55
5	Mass media participation	Low	27	30.00
		Medium	43	47.77
		High	20	22.22
			Mean: 13.24, SD: 4.33	
6	Social participation	Low	32	30.55
		Medium	32	30.55

		High	26	28.88
			Mean: 7.68, SD: 3.32	
7	Extension contact	Low	31	34.44
		Medium	37	41.11
		High	22	24.44
			Mean: 8.88, SD: 2.73	
8	Extension participation	Low	25	27.77
		Medium	42	46.66
		High	23	25.55
			Mean: 11.80, SD: 3.77	
9	Scientific orientation	Low	30	33.33
		Medium	26	28.88
		High	34	37.77
			Mean: 23.83, SD: 2.14	
10	Credit orientation	Low	28	31.11
		Medium	21	23.33
		High	41	45.55
			Mean: 13.28, SD: 3.10	
11	Cosmo politeness	Low	11	12.22
		Medium	69	76.66
		High	10	11.11
			Mean: 4.67, SD: 1.44	
12	Information consultancy	Low	27	30.00
		Medium	36	40.00
		High	27	30.00
			Mean: 30.45, SD: 6.77	
13	Cropping pattern	Single crop	32	35.55
		Double crop	58	64.44
14	Material possession	Low	30	33.33
		Medium	43	47.77
		High	17	18.88
			Mean: 7.77, SD: 2.57	
15	Farming experience	Low	12	13.33
		Medium	45	50.00
		High	33	36.66
			Mean: 3.22, SD: 0.69	

Summary and conclusions

It can be concluded from the results of the study that, Half of the extension personnel were in old age, having high working experience with average training. Majority of them were having medium level of awareness about use of ICT and majority of them had medium level of work load. Hence, more capacity building programmes on use of ICTs should be organized for the benefit of the extension personnel who intern may use them in their work. Awards and certificate possession of the extension personnel were significantly associated with RSKs. Awards and certificates play an important role in performance of RSKs. Hence, the policy makers have to consider this variable while planning and implementing the programmes.

With respect to farmer respondents, majority of the farmers were middle aged with medium level of education having big land holdings and with high income. Majority of them belonged to medium level of mass media participation, extension contact and extension participation. The organizations involved in providing extension services should organize more awareness programmes for the benefit of the farming community. There is a need to create awareness among the farmers regarding the role and importance of mass media and participation in extension activities for obtaining agricultural information.

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