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Knowledge level of heads of panchayat raj institutions about agricultural development programmes

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Abstract

The present study was conducted in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. All nine tahsils of Ratnagiri district were selected for the study. Ten Grampanchayat were selected by random sampling method from each of tahsils of Ratnagiri district. Considering the objectives and other aspects of the study, it was decided to study the heads of Panchayat Raj Institutions currently working in the office. Thus, one President of Zilla Parishad, Nine Panchayat Samiti Sabhapati and Ninety Gram Panchayat Sarpanch were the respondents for the study. The data were collected with the help of structured interview schedule. Personal technique was used for data collection. Thus the total sample size was 100.

Keywords: Knowledge level, agriculture development, heads of panchayat raj institutions

Introduction

The Panchayat Raj has come into existence with the sole aim of decentralization of government power for the welfare of the rural people. After independence, the Panchayat Raj has become a back bone of Indian democracy. In the three tier system of Panchayat Raj, the non officials are playing an important role in establishing linkages between officials and the beneficiaries. The local self government institutions are expected to plan and implement the programmes for rural, agriculture, horticulture and allied sectors. However, the line of resistance between a villagers and an officer is hard. Therefore it is expected that knowledge on programmes of rural and agriculture development should infiltrate through non official who is nearer and dearer to the villagers, who is at the grass root level of community development by providing assistance. Heads elected to the various Panchayat Raj Institutions are therefore very important because they are not politically influential, but because they are direct carriers of knowledge of rural and agricultural development programmes, rural people are convinced to a greater extent by them. Further, no development can take place unless there is active participation of the people. Heads of PRIs by getting proper support from their Panchayat members shall involve the farmer in the process of rural and agriculture development. The officials of various line departments are catalytic agents only. They are important, no doubt, but more important are peoples' representatives. On the back drop of the foregoing discussion, it becomes clear that the elected Heads of Panchayat Raj Institutions could play a significant role in around development programmes. The present study has been undertaken with the following specific objectives.

1. To assess the knowledge level of heads of panchayat raj institutions about agriculture development programmes.

Methodology

The present study was conducted in Ratnagiri district, Konkan region of Maharashtra state. All nine tahsils of Ratnagiri district were selected for the study. Ten Grampanchayat were selected by random sampling method from each of tahsils of Ratnagiri district. Considering the objectives and other aspects of the study, it was decided to study the heads of Panchayat Raj Institutions currently working in the office.

In Ratnagiri district there is one president of Zilla Parishad, 9 Panchayat Samiti Sabhapati and 837 Gram Panchayat Sarpanch. Thus, one President of Zilla Parishad, Nine Panchayat Samiti Sabhapati and Ninety Gram Panchayat Sarpanch were the respondents for the study. Thus, the total sample size was 100. The Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The data were collected by the investigator herself with the structured interview schedule developed for the study.

Collected data were processed and converted into suitable statistical methods such as frequency, percentage, correlation analysis and multiple regressions.

Results and Discussion

1. Knowledge level of heads of panchayat raj institutions about agricultural development programmes

The data regarding overall knowledge of heads of Panchayat Raj Institutions about agricultural development programmes are given in Table 1.

The findings presented in Table 1 about overall knowledge level of heads about agricultural development programmes revealed that majority (58.00 per cent) of the respondents had medium knowledge level, followed by one-fourth (25.00 per cent) of them had 'low' knowledge level and 17.00 per cent had 'high' knowledge about agriculture development programmes. The average knowledge score about agriculture development programme was 28.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to their Knowledge about Agricultural development programmes

Sl. No.	Knowledge about Agricultural development programmes	Frequency (n=100)	Percentage
1	Low (Up to 21)	25	25.00
2	Medium (22 to 35)	58	58.00
3	High (Above 36)	17	17.00
	(Mean 28) Total	100	100.00

Agriculture and Horticulture forms a major component of rural economy and unless this is improved, the expected rural development cannot be achieved, since most of the heads of Panchayat Raj Institutions were from the farming families and also holding the chairpersons of Zilla, Taluka and Gram panchayats as well as having relatively good educational background. Since, they themselves were cultivators naturally they had good knowledge about agriculture development. Being heads they will be having continuous interaction with different level functionaries in the agriculture development. Further, an intensive propagation of agriculture innovations by the concerned experts and grass root level extension agents might have made them to acquire knowledge about agriculture development. In view of their own experience of the problems relating to agriculture activities might have made them to know more about agriculture development.

The studies have gained support from the findings of Shivaramu and channegowda (1991), Mahadik (1995), Shantasheela (2002), Mankar (2003) and Doddahanumaiah (2005).

On the basis of results of the present study leads to accept the hypothesis, that the heads of Panchayat Raj Institutions differ with regards to their knowledge about agriculture development programmes.

Conclusion

The findings about overall knowledge level of heads about agricultural development programmes revealed that majority (58.00 per cent) of the respondents had medium knowledge level, followed by one-fourth (25.00 per cent) of them had 'low' knowledge level and 17.00 per cent had 'high' knowledge about agriculture development programmes.

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