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Constraints faced by the ICAR Farmer FIRST Programme Participant Farmers

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Abstract

The present research investigation was carried out in Ahmednagar district of Western region of Maharashtra state with aim to identify the constraints faced by the ICAR Farmer FIRST Programme participant farmers and to invite suggestions from them to overcome constraints. The ex-post-facto research design of social research was used. Using purposive sampling method, the data was collected from total 300 respondents through personal interview method with the help of structured interview schedule. The statistical tools like frequency and percentage were used for the analysis of the research data collected in this study. The results of the study revealed that that majority of participant farmers faced major constraints of high labour cost followed by scarcity of labour during peak season, lack of source of irrigation facilities and unavailability of electricity, lack of finance for purchasing farm inputs, high cost of insecticides and pesticides and lack of cooperation among farmers. The major suggestions offered by the participant farmers to overcome these constraints were availability of credit on time followed by regular supply of electricity, procedure should be made simple for availability of subsidy, provision of inputs at subsidized rates, proper cooperation among farmers and provision of technical guidance time to time.

Keywords: ICAR Farmer FIRST Programme, Constraints, Problems, Bottlenecks, Participant Farmers, FFP

Introduction

The Farmer FIRST Programme (FFP) has emerged as a promising approach in agricultural development, which is launched by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to move beyond the production and productivity; to privilege the smallholder agriculture; and complex, diverse and risk prone realities of majority of the farmers through enhancing farmers-scientists interface. The nomenclature of Farmer FIRST Programme is farmer's Farm, Innovations, Resources, Science and Technology. The synergy between the resources present on the farm and the application of innovations derived from modern science and technology within the realm of agricultural research, as implemented at the farmer's field, has fostered a farmer-centric approach in agricultural research and extension. It necessitates the amalgamation, integration, development and refinement of modern technology from research institutions with the knowledge and wisdom of farmers. This process not only enhances farmers' capacity to effectively utilize appropriate technology but also furnishes valuable feedback to scientists, aiding in the refinement and fine-tuning of technology to better align with local settings. The fundamental concept underpinning this approach is that the farmers assume a central role in identifying research problems, establishing priorities, conducting experiments, and managing them within real farming conditions. In essence, the Farmer FIRST Programme unites farmers and scientists on a single platform to comprehensively address the needs of Indian agriculture in the modern age.

The Farmer FIRST Programme (FFP) represents a significant shift in agricultural development, prioritizing farmer participation and knowledge in finding solutions. While the program boasts successes in collaborative innovation, there's a need to understand the challenges faced and also the suggestions to overcome these constraints by participants. This research investigation delves into the constraints encountered and suggestions made by individuals involved in the Farmer FIRST Programme. By knowing the constraints and considering the suggestions to overcome these constraints, we can pave the way for a more inclusive and impactful Farmer FIRST Programme, maximizing its potential to benefit both farmers and the agricultural sector as a whole.

Methodology

The present research investigation was carried out in Ahmednagar district of Western region of Maharashtra state with aim to identify the constraints faced by the ICAR

Farmer FIRST Programme participant farmers and to invite suggestions from them to overcome constraints. The ex-post-facto research design of social research was used. Using purposive sampling method, the data was collected from total 300 respondents through personal interview method with the help of structured interview schedule. The statistical tools like frequency, percentage and rank were used for the analysis of the research data collected during this study.

Results and Discussion

Constraints experienced by ICAR Farmer FIRST Programme participant farmers: In this research investigation the constraints faced by the participant farmers of the ICAR Farmer FIRST programme were studied. The results of analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to the constraints

Sr. No.	Constraints	Respondents (n=300)		
		Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	High labour cost	201	67.00	I
2.	Scarcity of labour during peak season	195	65.00	II
3.	Lack of source of irrigation facilities	187	62.33	III
4.	Unavailability of electricity	179	59.67	IV
5.	Lack of finance for purchasing farm inputs	175	58.33	V
6.	High cost of insecticides and pesticides	174	58.00	VI
7.	Lack of cooperation among farmers	110	36.66	VII

The data shown Table 1 revealed that high labour cost was ranked first (67.00%) as a major constraint faced by respondents. This was followed by the scarcity of labour during peak season (65.00%), lack of source of irrigation facilities (62.33%), unavailability of electricity (59.67%), lack of finance for purchasing farm inputs (58.33%), high cost of insecticides and pesticides (58.00%) and lack of cooperation among farmers (36.66%).

The findings of the study are supported by the findings of Kalamkar *et al.* (2015) [3], Shambharkar *et al.* (2017) [7], Manjeet (2019) [4], Patil (2019) [6] and Patil (2023) [5].

Suggestions given by participant farmers of ICAR Farmer FIRST Programme for overcoming the constraints faced by them

The data with respect to the suggestions of the respondents to overcome the constraints faced is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to the suggestions given by respondents for overcoming the constraints

Sr. No.	Suggestions	Respondents (n=300)		
		Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Availability of credit on time	210	70.00	I
2	Regular supply of electricity	207	69.00	II
3	Procedure should be made simple for availability of subsidy.	175	58.33	III
4	Provision of inputs at subsidized rates	162	54.00	IV
5	Proper cooperation among farmers	111	37.00	V
6	Provision of technical guidance from time to time	45	15.00	VI

From data presented in Table 2 it is revealed that the majority of the respondents (70.00%) suggested that availability of timely credit facilities followed by 69.00 per cent suggested the regular supply of electricity, 58.33 per cent suggested procedure should be made simple for availability of subsidy, provision of inputs at subsidized rates (54.00%), Proper cooperation among farmers (37.00%) and providing technical guidance time to time (15.00%).

The present research findings are in line with the findings of Ahire and Kapase (2015) [1] and Patil (2019) [6].

Conclusion

The study revealed that the majority of the participants farmers of the ICAR farmer FIRST programme faced major constraints of high labour cost followed by scarcity of labour during peak season, lack of source of irrigation facilities and unavailability of electricity, lack of finance for purchasing farm inputs, high cost of insecticides and pesticides and lack of cooperation among farmers. The major suggestions offered by the participant farmers to overcome these constraints were availability of credit on time followed by regular supply of electricity, procedure should be made simple for availability of subsidy, provision of inputs at subsidized rates, proper cooperation among farmers and provision of technical guidance time to time.

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