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Agricultural Technology Information Centre (ATIC): Farmers' Perception

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted for impact assessment of ATIC by measuring the level of satisfaction of the farmers visiting the ATIC. Data from 59 farmers were collected who visited and registered at ATIC, SKUAST-Kashmir during last four years (2006-2010). The selection of farmers was made by random sampling technique. The data collected with the help of pre-structured interview schedule and analyzed to assess the level of satisfaction. ATIC products, services and information were rated very important and useful, but the respondents were dissatisfied with the availability of products, services and informations provided to the farming community. It is, thus, recommended that there should be some improvement in the availability of quality products and other services and information to be provided to the farmers.

Key words : Impact assessment, ATIC, technology transfer.

INTRODUCTION

In view of rapid changing scenario of agriculture in the country, the main focus has been largely shifted from transfer of technology to more holistic approach. The farmers today need to be linked with business system, research institutions and global market. The extension system therefore plays an important role as information provider in advisory services and using the professional skill of farmers.

The establishment of Agricultural Technology Information Centre (ATIC) is meant to provide such a mechanism beyond individual units of research information. It serves as a single window delivery system with an objective to help the farming community to solve their location specific problems and make available all the technological information and inputs in respect of quality seeds and planting materials, diagnostic services and providing feed-back information from technology users to research institutions.

The impact assessment of ATIC services is of paramount importance with a view to explore the technology transfer and its sustainability. The technology after its development and assessment, is to be transferred to the beneficiaries and it further needs to be assessed in various situations. In this context, impact assessment of ATIC service is necessary to know how far ATIC has influenced the beneficiary farmers and have created impact on the increased level of adoption of the recommended practices. This study aims to analyse the methodology, quality and quantity of extension activities carried through ATIC based on following objectives to assess the impact of ATIC by evaluating the level of satisfaction of beneficiaries of ATIC services such as products, services and informations and to study the perception of farmers towards importance and usefulness of ATIC services.

METHODOLOGY

Impact assessment of ATIC (technology products, services and information) was done by measuring the level of satisfaction of the farmers visiting the ATIC. Data from 59 farmers were collected who visited and registered at ATIC, SKUAST-Kashmir during last four years (2006-2010). The selection of farmers was made by random sampling technique. The data were collected with the help of pre-structured interview schedule and analyzed to assess the level of satisfaction and was computed in percentages for products, services and information rendered to them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The impact assessment of ATIC in terms of level of satisfaction of farmers/beneficiaries were carried out essentially for the services rendered by ATIC due to sale of technical products (inputs) produced at SKUAST-Kashmir, diagnostic services, farm advisory services and publications/ written materials *etc.*

The impact of ATIC on farmers were studied in terms of five-point scale (hardly an improvement to great

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improvement) on knowledge in agriculture, using new areas of agricultural technology, adoption of ATIC products, adoption of ATIC services, knowledge of input availability and utility of ATIC informations. It is evident from Table 1 that ATIC was having positive impact on the farmers. ATIC. Thirty five per cent (35%) of the farmers reported medium improvement in knowledge on agriculture whereas 32.1 per cent of the farmers reported quite some improvement and 6.9 per cent farmers/ beneficiaries reported great improvement in the knowledge of agricultural practices. Regarding the use of new agricultural technology, majority of farmers (40.1%) agreed that use of new agricultural technologies have quite some improvement, whereas only 15.1 per cent of the farmers reported that the use of new agricultural technology has hardly any improvement.

In case of adoption of ATIC products, 35.7 per cent of the farmers reported quite some improvement, 25.6 per cent reported medium improvement and only 16.1 per cent reported that there was great improvement, whereas a majority of the farmers (40.9%) reported medium improvement in adoption of ATIC services. One fourth (25.1%) of the farmers reported quite some improvement and minimum per cent (8.6%) reported hardly any improvement.

Regarding knowledge of input availability, majority of farmers (39.0%) reported medium improvement, 20.2 per cent reported great improvement and only 18.5 per cent reported little improvement. In case of adoption of ATIC information 30.9 per cent reported great improvement, more than twenty five percent (25.7%) reported medium improvement and a minimum percent (9.2%) reported that there was hardly any improvement. From the Table 1, it may be concluded that ATIC made a positive impact over visiting farmers at ATIC.

Table 1: Impact of ATIC on Respondents

Parameters	Degree of Improvement (in Per cent)				
	Great Improvement	Great semi Improvement	Medium Improvement	Little Improvement	Hardly Improvement
Knowledge on agriculture	6.9	32.1	34.1	15.8	11.1
Using new agricultural technology	9.5	40.1	29.6	7.7	15.1
Adoption of ATIC products	16.1	35.7	27.6	14.1	6.5
Adoption of ATIC services	9.6	25.6	40.9	17.4	8.6
Knowledge of input availability	20.2	12.7	39.0	18.5	9.1
Adoption of ATIC information	30.9	21.3	25.7	12.9	9.2

Table 2 presents the degree of satisfaction of the farmers with the single window approach. It was observed that majority of the farmers were dissatisfied with the single window system. In case of the products being sold and available with the ATIC, the 48.8 per cent of the farmers were highly dissatisfied whereas a minimum per cent (6.7%) of the farmers were satisfied with ATIC products. It was also observed that one-third of the farmers were dissatisfied with the services being provided by ATIC and only 15.2 per cent farmers were satisfied with the services of ATIC.

With regard to the information being given to farming community through ATIC, a majority of farmers (27.2%) were dissatisfied whereas 20.3 per cent were highly dissatisfied and one fourth of the farmers (25.4%) were satisfied with the information provided to farmers for different agricultural operations. This may be due to non-availability of seeds and plant materials through ATIC to farming community. The services are also not centralized and the farmers had to approach agriculture and other line departments for different kind of services and information.

Table 2: Satisfaction with single window approach

Degree of satisfaction	Products		Services		Information	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Highly satisfied	5	8.4	9	15.2	9	15.2
Satisfied	4	6.7	10	16.9	15	25.4
Undecided	6	10.2	5	8.4	7	11.9
Dissatisfied	17	28.9	20	33.9	16	27.2
Highly dissatisfied	27	45.8	15	25.6	12	20.3
Total	**59**	**100**	**59**	**100**	**59**	**100**

Table 3 showed the importance and usefulness of ATIC by the respondents. It is clear from the table that more than half of the farmers reported that ATIC products were very important, only small percentage of farmers (12.15%) reported that the ATIC products were not that important.

In case of the ATIC services 41.47 per cent of the farmers reported that ATIC services are very important and only 10.5 per cent reported that ATIC services are not at all important. Furthermore, the 44.3 per cent of the farmer reported that information provided by ATIC was very important.

Hence, ATIC products of the Directorate of Extension education, SKUAST-K, Shalimar, were perceived to be the most important followed by services and information.

Table 3: Perception about ATICs importance and usefulness

Parameters	Degree of Importance indication (%)			
	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Products (Sale and availability)	12.1	14.2	22.2	51.5
Services rendered	10.5	12.2	35.6	41.47
Informations provided	15.2	16.1	24.4	44.3

CONCLUSION

ATIC products, services and information were rated very important and useful, but the respondents were dissatisfied with the availability of products, services and informations provided to the farming community. It is thus recommended that there is a need for improvement in the availability of quality products and other services and information provided to the farmers.

ATIC is certainly improving techno-socio-economic conditions of the farmers by increasing knowledge level, use of new agricultural technologies and adoption of ATIC products, services and information. The study revealed that farmers find ATIC services important and useful, hence it is having positive impacts. There is a urgent need for mass awareness and publicity among the farming community about the activities and facilities of ATIC through mass media. Steps need to be taken for functioning of single window delivery system more effectively with the sale of all university products at every transfer of technology centres/ institute including Krishi Vigyan Kendras.

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