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Attitude of Extension Personnel towards Functioning of Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) of Palnadu District in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to know the attitude of extension personnel towards functioning of Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) particularly in the Palnadu district of Andhra Pradesh. Ninety extension personnel from three mandals of Palnadu district were selected and interviewed. The results of the study indicated that majority (74.44 %) of the extension personnel working in RBKs had most favourable to favourable attitude towards functioning of RBKs. This indicates that 25.56 per cent of the respondents' attitude towards functioning of RBKs need to be improved. Providing full-fledged infrastructural facilities at RBKs and training them to function effectively will go a long way in improving the functioning of RBKs, which is likely to influence the satisfaction resulting in improving the attitude of extension personnel.

Keywords : Attitude, Extension personnel, Rythu bharosa kendra (RBK)

Agriculture plays an important role in Indian economy. Agriculture and allied sectors provide employment to around 58 per cent of the nation's population and contribute Rs.19.48 lakh crores to the country's Gross Value Added (GVA). Agriculture accounts for around 51 per cent of geographical land, demonstrating the importance of agriculture in the Indian economy, whereas cropping intensity has increased by 25 per cent after independence. It demonstrates that India has progressed from a food deficit to food secured country. Andhra Pradesh is India's rice bowl and one of the country's most important agricultural states. Andhra Pradesh rural population is around 63 per cent. In 2021-22, the Gross Value Added (GVA) from agriculture to states income is 18.8 per cent. Agricultural and allied sectors reported a growth rate of 14.50 per cent, agriculture alone contributed to a growth rate of 6.30 per cent. The horticulture and livestock sector witnessed a growth rate of 13.24 per cent and 11.46 per cent, respectively (Agriculture Department of Andhra Pradesh). Government of Andhra Pradesh launched Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) for the farmers as one-stop solution for all agriculture and allied firms' products and services on 30th May, 2020. RBK is a one-stop shop for all farm needs at the village level only. These RBKs are monitored jointly by the Department of Agriculture, Horticulture, AP Seeds, Sericulture, Fisheries and Animal husbandry. RBKs are operated by Village Agriculture Assistant or Horticulture Assistant and Village Animal Husbandry Assistant / Sericulture Assistant / Village Fisheries Assistant are responsible for running RBKs in their respective jurisdictions and handling tasks related to agriculture, horticulture, veterinary, fisheries and sericulture. The newly formed RBKs have digital kiosks and apps to assist the farmers in buying the Agri inputs like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, livestock feeds and veterinary medicine and the staff will deliver the product at right time for the market price. After placing an order, it takes 48 hours to reach the farmer. RBKs prevent the middleman and spurious goods. An integrated call center has been established to address the problems and give solutions to them. With this

call center, the farmers get the solution for their problems and the government also knows what types of problems are being faced by the farmers. RBKs provide services like the Rythu Bharosa-welfare scheme an input subsidy scheme has been introduced for providing financial support to purchase input product and e-crop booking. It is all about documenting the farming land to get free crop insurance for the farmers. Polam-Badi is an extension program where farmers are trained in the field about minimum usage of inputs and getting maximum output and reducing the cost of cultivation. Weather forecasting and market information related to agriculture and allied sectors are also available at RBKs. Registration for tenant farmer's service is also offered by RBKs at the farm gate. RBKs are also acting as procurement centers and giving assurance to farmers for getting MSP for their products. RBKs are also providing soil testing service. The main objective of the study was to know the attitude of extension personnel towards functioning of Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs).

Methodology

The present study was conducted in Palnadu district of Andhra Pradesh. Three mandals with highest number of RBKs was selected namely Narasaraopet, Sattenapalle, Rompicherla in Palnadu district of Andhra Pradesh from each mandal 30 extension personnel were randomly selected for the study and constitute 90 respondents. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study and data was collected through a structured interview schedule was developed for the study and primary data was collected from respondents through personal interviews.

Dependent variable *i.e.,* Attitude and sixteen independent variables namely age, qualification, working experience, work load, training received, organizational climate, mass media participation, extension contact, extension participation, awareness about ICTs, achievement motivation, scientific orientation, job satisfaction, co-ordination, risk orientation, conflict management were selected for the study. Interview schedules was used for collecting data from extension personnel. Data was collected through interview schedules. The data analysis was carried by means of statistical tools like frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, correlation and kruskal-wallis test.

Results and Discussion

Table 1, indicates that, 44.44 per cent of extension personnel had most favourable attitude towards functioning of RBKs, whereas 30.00 per cent and 25.56 per cent had favourable and least favourable attitude towards functioning of RBKs respectively. It indicates that, significant proportion (44.44%) of extension personnel had most favourable attitude towards functioning of RBKs the possible reason might be that the recent extension system is demand driven in nature, it attracts the farmers to the RBKs with a specific purpose of getting the information as well as, providing wide range of services. Thus, the extension personnel would interact with the interested and needy farmers and helping them in all possible ways to solve their problems. Least favourable attitude might be that due to lack of infrastructure and storage

Table 1

Overall attitude of extension personnel towards functioning of RBKs

(n=90)

Categories and criteria		Extension personnel		Mean	SD
		No.	%		
Least favorable	<(77.34)	23	25.56		
Favorable	(77.34-83.52)	27	30.00	80.43	6.18
Most favorable	>(83.52)	40	44.44		

TABLE 2

Statement wise attitude of extension personnel towards functioning of RBKs

(n=90)

Statements	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
	No.(%)	No.(%)	No.(%)	No.(%)	No.(%)
RBKs will create a positive impact on agricultural development in Andhra Pradesh	84 (93.33)	6 (06.67)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)
The Single window system adopted in RBK is able to solve the farm and related problems of farming community	48 (53.33)	42 (46.67)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)
Remote villages are also getting extension services through RBKs	56 (62.22)	34 (37.78)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)
RBK imparts knowledge to the clients on various agricultural innovations	24 (26.67)	64 (71.11)	2 (02.22)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)
Farmers are not satisfied about the timely guidance . given by the extension personnel of RBKs	9 (10.00)	11 (12.22)	2 (02.22)	22 (24.45)	46 (51.11)
Quite a good job is being done through RBKs for the betterment of socio-economic status of the farmers	22 (24.44)	60 (66.67)	2 (02.22)	6 (06.67)	0 (00.00)
The facilities created in RBK is not successful and needs improvement	4 (04.44)	24 (26.68)	0 (00.00)	30 (33.33)	32 (35.55)
The present functioning of RBK is not successful and needs improvement	10 (11.11)	18 (20.00)	0 (00.00)	24 (26.67)	38 (42.22)
INM& IPM are two major areas on which RBK give more importance neglecting other area of crop production	12 (13.33)	38 (42.22)	8 (08.90)	32 (35.55)	0 (00.00)
RBK promotes the eco-friendly farming system	16 (17.79)	58 (64.44)	14 (15.55)	2 (02.22)	0 (00.00)
Demonstration kit supplied to RBK to conduct demonstration is not sufficient	22 (24.44)	22 (24.44)	8 (08.90)	38 (42.22)	0 (00.00)
RBK's services are mainly pertaining to agricultural activity neglecting allied enterprises	30 (33.33)	26 (28.90)	2 (02.22)	28 (31.11)	4 (04.44)
RBK increases extension workers creativity, professionalism and their job competence	11 (12.22)	64 (71.11)	3 (03.33)	0 (00.00)	12 (13.34)
RBK helps extension worker to gain more confidence among farmers	28 (31.11)	52 (57.79)	6 (06.66)	2 (02.22)	2 (02.22)
RBK will helps to reduce budget burden of the state government	13 (14.44)	50 (55.57)	0 (00.00)	27 (30.00)	0 (00.00)
RBK enhances overall efficiency of agriculture production system	31 (34.44)	57 (63.34)	0 (00.00)	2 (02.22)	0 (00.00)
RBK is giving more importance to resource poor farmers	52 (57.79)	33 (36.66)	3 (03.33)	2 (02.22)	0 (00.00)
RBK will not help farmers for better utilization of their resources	2 (02.22)	5 (05.55)	4 (04.44)	30 (33.33)	49 (54.46)
RBKs are effective in dissemination of advisory services and scientific innovations to farmers	43 (47.79)	41 (45.55)	6 (06.66)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)
RBKs are effective in channelizing the government schemes and subsidies	68 (75.56)	22 (24.44)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)

facilities in RBKs, lack of support from superiors and also satisfying both farmers and superiors along with office work is difficult for extension personnel. The above findings were in agreement with the findings of Sahana (2003), Akhilesh Kumar Dubey (2008) and Nagalakshmi (2011).

From the above Table 2, it is observed that majority (93.33%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement that RBK will create positive impact on agricultural development in Andhra Pradesh. More than half (53.33%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, that single window system adopted in RBK is able to solve the farm and related problems of farming community. Nearly two third (62.22%) of the respondents strongly agreed that remote villages are also getting extension services through RBKs. More than two third (71.11%) of the respondents agreed that RBKs imparts knowledge and skill to the clients on various agricultural innovations. More than half (51.11%) of the respondents strongly disagreed to the negative statement that, farmers are not satisfied about the timely guidance given by the extension personnel of RBK. Two third (66.67%) of the respondents agreed that quite a good job is being done through RBKs for the betterment of socio-economic status of the farmers. Nearly two third (64.44%) of the respondents agreed to the statements that RBK promotes the eco-friendly farming system and more than two third (71.11%) of the respondents agreed to the statement that RBKs increases extension workers creativity, professio-nalism and their job competence. More than half (57.79%) and (55.57%) of the respondents agreed that RBKs helps extension worker to gain more confidence among farmers and RBK will helps to reduce budget burden of the state government, respectively. Nearly two third (63.34%) of the respondents agreed that RBKs enhances overall efficiency of agriculture production system. More than alf (57.79 %) of the respondents strongly agreed that, RBK is giving more importance to resource poor farmers. Nearly half (47.79%) of extension personnel strongly agreed that RBKs are effective in dissemination of advisory services and scientific innovations to farmers. Majority (75.56%) of the respondents strongly agreed that RBKs are effective in channelizing the government schemes and subsidies. Scale used above was taken from Ramappa patil (2014) with suitable modifications.

From the data presented in Table 3, it is evident that xtension personnel exhibited the most favorable attitude towards the first statement that, RBK will create a positive impact on agricultural development in Andhra Pradesh, with the highest mean score of 4.93 and being assigned the 1st rank. Following the next attitude statement, RBKs are effective in channelizing the government schemes and subsidies obtained the 2nd highest mean score of 4.75 and was assigned the 2nd rank by the extension personnel. Additionally, the subsequent statement, remote villages are also getting extension services through RBKs achieved 3rd highest mean score of 4.62 and was ranked as the 3rd most favorable by the respondents. Extension personnel demonstrated the least favorable attitude towards statements that, facilities created in RBK are notsuccessful and need improvement received the lowest mean score of 2.80, given 18th rank. Preceding this, the statement, demonstration kit supplied to RBK to conduct demonstration is not sufficient received a mean score of 3.31, resulting in 17th rank. Furthermore, the attitude statement INM & IPM are two major areas on which RBK gives more importance, neglecting other areas of crop production obtained a mean score of 3.33, leading to it being ranked 16th in terms of least favorable attitude. Table 4, reveals the comparative analysis, it is seen from the findings that there was a positive and significant difference in attitude among three mandal respondents, where the mean rank of attitude of extension personnel found to be higher (59.93) in Narasaraopet mandal followed by Sattenapalle mandal (42.57) and less noticed in Rompicherla mandal (34.00). The most favourable attitude of Narasaraopet mandal respondents might be because, they were having high recognition in the department and co-operation with stakeholders when

TABLE 3

Attitude of extension personnel towards the functioning of RBKs based on mean score and ranks

(n=90)

Statements	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
RBK will create positive impact on agricultural development in Andhra Pradesh	444	4.93	I
RBKs are effective in channelizing the government schemes and subsidies	428	4.75	II
Remote villages are also getting extension services through RBK	416	4.62	III
The Single window system adopted in RBK is able to solve the farm and related problems of farming community	408	4.53	IV
RBK is giving more importance to resource poor farmers	405	4.50	V
RBKs are effective in dissemination of advisory services and scientific . innovations to farmers	397	4.41	VI
RBK enhances overall efficiency of agriculture production system	389	4.32	VII
RBK imparts knowledge and skill to the clients on various agricultural innovations	382	4.24	VIII
Quite a good job is being done through RBK for the betterment of socio-economic status of the farmers	368	4.08	IX
RBK helps extension worker to gain more confidence among farmers.	368	4.08	IX
RBK promotes the eco-friendly farming system	358	3.97	X
RBK will not help farmers for better utilization of their farm resources	351	3.90	XI
Farmers are not satisfied about the timely guidance given by the extension personnel of RBK	350	3.88	XII
RBK's services are mainly pertaining to agricultural activity neglecting allied enterprises	349	3.87	XIII
RBK will helps to reduce budget burden of the state government	332	3.68	XIV
RBK increases extension workers creativity, professionalism and their job competence	332	3.68	XIV
The present functioning of RBK is not successful and needs improvement	312	3.46	XV
INM & IPM are two major topics on which RBK give more importance neglecting other area of crop production	300	3.33	XVI
Demonstration kit supplied to RBK to conduct demonstration is not sufficient	298	3.31	XVII
The facilities created in RBK is not successful and needs improvement	252	2.80	XVIII

TABLE 4

Comparative analysis of attitude of extension personnel among three mandals

(n=90)

Name of Mandal	Sample (n)	Mean Rank	Chi-Square value (x^2)
Narasaraopet	30	59.93	
Sattenapalle	30	42.57	15.50 **
Rompicherla	30	34.00	

** Significant at 0.01 level of probability, $x^2(0.01,2df) = 9.210$

Note : Kruskal- Wallis Test

compared to other two mandal respondents. The data subjected from Kruskal-Wallis test approach comprising of Chi-square test statistic. The result finally indicates that difference in attitude of three mandals under study found to be highly significant at (-15.50**) ($p<0.01$).

The Mysore Journal of Agricultural SciencesData presented in Table 5, indicates the relationship between the profile of extension personnel and their attitude towards functioning of RBKs. The extension personnel characteristics *viz.,* working experience,

TABLE 5

Relationship between attitude of extension personnel with their profile

(n=90)

Independent Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Age	0.033 NS
Qualification	0.154 *
Working experience	0.381 **
Workload	-0.791 **
Training received	0.579 **
Organizational climate	0.630 **
Mass media participation	0.610 **
Extension contact	0.370 *
Extension participation	0.449 **
Awareness about ICTs	0.137 *
Achievement motivation	0.034 NS
Scientific orientation	0.470 **
Job satisfaction	0.474 **
Co-ordination	0.567 **
Risk orientation	0.058 NS
Conflict management	0.569 **

*Significance at 5% level, ** Significance at 1% level, NS-Non-significant

TABLE 6

Multiple regression analysis of profile of the extension personnel with their attitude

(n=90)

Independent Variables	Regression Coefficient(b)	Standard Error(SEb)	value(t)
Age	0.243	0.081	2.016 *
Qualification	0.380	0.206	2.506 *
Working experience	0.467	0.339	1.379 NS
Workload	-0.069	0.319	2.115 *
Training received	0.657	0.339	5.226 **
Organizational climate	0.315	0.115	2.738 **
Mass media participation	0.341	0.156	2.123 *
Extension contact	0.238	0.114	2.096 *
Extension participation	0.251	0.106	2.188 *
Awareness about ICT	1.080	0.265	4.073 **
Achievement motivation	0.811	0.139	5.842 **
Scientific orientation	0.203	0.149	3.818 **
Job satisfaction	1.270	0.299	4.189 **
Co-ordination	0.756	0.361	2.093 *
Risk orientation	0.528	0.475	1.112 NS
Conflict management	0.846	0.439	2.007 *

R2 = 0.849; F-Value = 20.12**; NS= Non- Significant
* Significant at 0.05 level of probability;
** Significant at 0.01 level of probability

training received, organizational climate, mass media participation, extension participation, scientific orientation, job satisfaction, co-ordination, conflict management were found to have positive and significant relationship and work load had negative and significant relationship with attitude at 1 per cent level of significance. Qualification, extension contact, awareness about ICTs were found to be positive and significant relationship with dependent variable at 5 per cent level of significance and age, achievement motivation, risk orientation found to be positive and non-significant with attitude of extension personnel towards functioning of RBKs. Independent variables age and qualification are in line with Darshan, M. E. (2017).

It is evident from the Table 6, that six independent variables namely training received, organizational climate, awareness about ICTs, achievement motivation, scientific orientation, job satisfaction established highly significant and were influencing the attitude of extension personnel ($P < 0.01$). Further, eight independent variables considered namely age, qualification, work load, mass media participation, extension contact, extension participation, co-ordination and conflict management established significant and influencing the attitude of respondents ($p < 0.05$). However, the remaining independent variables working experience, risk orientation found to be non-significant with respect to statistical result towards attitude ($P > 0.05$). It can be concluded that the 'F' test assessing the contribution of all the sixteen independent variables establishing highly significantly ($F=20.12^{**}$, $P<0.05$). It is finally evident that all these sixteen independent variables put together contribute 84.90 per cent of the variation in attitude of extension personnel.

The present study was conducted to know the attitude of extension personnel towards functioning of Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBK). Results found that, majority (74.44 %) of the extension personnel working in RBKs had most favourable to favourable attitude towards functioning of RBKs. This indicates that still 25.56 per cent of the respondents attitude towards functioning of RBKs need to be improved. Providing full-fledged infrastructural facilities at RBKs and training them to function effectively will go long way in improving the functioning of RBKs, which is likely to influence the satisfaction resulting in improving the attitude of extension personnel.

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