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Training Effectiveness of Skill Development Training Programmes among the Aspirational Districts of Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

Aspirational districts programme was launched by GOI in 2018 to raise the living standards of citizens by focusing on five major thematical areas *viz.* health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion and skill development and basic infrastructure in the poor performing 115 districts of the country. The problem of unemployment and poverty in rural areas can be tackled by inculcating the desirable skills and develops entrepreneurial ability. The study was focused on assessing the effectiveness of skill development training programmes in two aspirational districts (Raichur and Yadgir) of Karnataka. Primary data was collected from 120 trainees including 30 farmers and 30 agricultural labours from each district trained under various skill training institutes. The independent variables like number of training programmes attended, learning motivation, innovativeness, motivation to transfer learning, self-efficacy and achievement motivation were positive and significantly affecting the training effectiveness. The overall effectiveness of training was found to be 51 per cent which came under medium effectiveness category. Among the different aspects of training programme 'coverage' was found to be more effective. But trainings were least effective in 'need assessment' of trainees. A majority of trainees perceived that training improved their knowledge and skills.

INTRODUCTION

India has now emerged as the fifth largest economy in the world and targeted to achieving a GDP of five trillion dollar by 2024-2025 (IMF, 2020). This fast-paced growth rate is anticipated to lift millions of people out of poverty. However, the standard of living of many of its citizens may not correlate to the existing growth story, a fact reflected in the UNDP's Human Development Index wherein India ranked 131 out of 189 countries (UNDP, 2019) which clearly depicts the poor quality of living standards among the citizens. Lot of heterogeneity exits between the states and within the states also lot of inter-district variations. Hence, government of India decided to uplift the districts which have made very lesser progress in achieving key social outcome, so that India can improve it's ranking in the human development index. Government of India identified 115 most backward districts out of 615 in India and launched the "Transformation of Aspirational Districts" Programme in January 2018.The Aspirational district programme (ADP) mainly focus on measuring and improving the human development outcomes in these districts across five broad pillars- health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion and skill development and basic infrastructure. Among the five broad thematical areas skill development will play a major role in tackling the problem of unemployment and poverty in rural areas by inculcating the desirable skills and develops entrepreneurial ability through various skill trainings. Skill development refers to

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improvement in capabilities of an individual to perform better and efficient for his/her overall growth. Training will help us in building a skill or expertise being the process of organization of opportunities for participants to acquire necessary understanding and skill (Lynton and Pareek, 1990), generally skills are acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained effort in order to smoothly and adaptively carryout complex activities involving ideas (cognitive skills), things (technical skills) and people (interpersonal skills). Cognitive skills are needed in agriculture to make better decisions, technical skills are required to handle various implements, and interpersonal skills are required to share farm-related information (Bhattacharyya and Mukherjee, 2019). Training effectiveness refers as the degree to which a training activity attains its objectives like the desired changes in knowledge, skill and attitude. But most of the training programmes are conducted haphazardly without assessing the training needs as a result, the human and material resources spent on training becomes pointless.

Since 1999, approximately India is losing 2000 farmers everyday (Sainath, 2013). Furthermore, the engaged agricultural workforce lives on just a seventh of GDP, meaning that farmers gain less than a fourth of what others do on an average (Gupta, 2015). Agriculture employs 263 million people (54.6%), with more than half of them working as agricultural laborer. The number of agricultural workers is expected to decrease to 190 million by 2022 at a rate of expected decline of 33 per cent (IAMR, 2013). Agriculture need to be made more productive, attractive, and enterprising so that not only rural-urban migration is minimized, but farmers also begin to take pride in their work. To achieve this, we must build skills among farmers, so that conventional, time-consuming, and expensive methods are replaced by scientific, modern, cost-effective, and productive methods. Hence, skill development was considered as one among the five developmental areas with 5 per cent weightage in ADP. Since, the inception of ADP lot of efforts were taken by the government organizations, NGOs, ICAR institutes and state departments to organize skill trainings to farmers and agricultural laborers. But there is need to understand how effective these trainings in terms of attaining pre-determined training objectives and imparting the knowledge and skill to the trainees. The assessment report on aspirational district programme reported that skill development requires a greater attention in the aspirational districts (Michel et al., 2020). Hence, in the present study is an attempt to assess the effectiveness of skill development training programmes in agricultural sector through aspirational district programme.

METHODOLOGY

The present study follows exploratory research design. Two aspirational districts of Karnataka *viz.,* Raichur and Yadgiri were selected purposively. Three training institutes which were actively providing skill-based trainings in agriculture sector were purposively selected from each district. Concerned head of all the six training institutes were contacted for the list of trainee who attended skill training from the inception of ADP. From the list of trainees, 30 farmers and 30 agricultural labourers were selected from each district (total sample size is 120) through proportionate stratified random sampling method. Majority of the respondents were interviewed personally and some of them were contacted through telephone for data collection due to COVID-19 restriction. Data was collected with the help of pre tested structured interview schedule.

Training effectiveness was referred as the degree to which objectives set forth before the conduct of training are fulfilled and the degree to which trainees were satisfied with the different aspects of the training like quality, utility, coverage, physical facilities, competency of trainers, appropriateness of training, need assessment and skill development from the training programme. The training effectiveness was measured on 3-point continuum viz., agree, undecided and disagree using the structured scale developed by Lambe (2000) with suitable modification for the present study. Based on overall score obtained, each respondent was categorized into low, medium and high training effectiveness group using cumulative cube root frequency method. Effectiveness of different training aspects were analysed by categorizing the respondents into low, medium and high category based on each training aspects score. For each aspect, the frequencies falling under each rating were tabulated and the frequencies in each of the categories were multiplied by the assigned scores and added. The resulting sum of each aspect was divided by the number of respondents. In this way, weighted mean score in each aspect was calculated and all the training aspects were rank ordered.

To study the combined effect of independent variables viz. age, education, annual income, operational land holding, number of training programmes attended, extension contact, mass media exposure, learning motivation, economic motivation, innovativeness, motivation to transfer learning, self-efficacy, achievement motivation and risk orientation in explaining the variation on the dependent variable (training effectiveness), the multiple regression analysis was carried out as follows:

$$Y = b_0 + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 \text{ .....} b_n \text{ x n}$$

Where, b_0 = Constant, Y = Dependent variable, $X_1 \ldots X_n$ = Independent variable, b1 …bn = Regression coefficient for respective variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of training programme

The results of Table 1 indicate the distribution of trainees into three groups *viz.,* low, medium and high based on training effectiveness score. Nearly half of the agricultural labourers (50%) were having medium level of training effectiveness. Only 22 per cent of the respondents reported high training effectiveness. In case of farmers; majority (52%) belonged to medium training effectiveness group followed by 35 per cent belongs to high group and only 13 per cent respondents reported training as less effective. In overall 51 per cent of respondents reported training was medium

Table 1. Distribution of respondents based on skill development training effectiveness

Training effectiveness	Agricultural labourers (%)	Farmers (%)	Total (%)
Low	28	13	21
Medium	50	52	51
high	22	35	28
Total	100	100	100

effective followed by 28 per cent of respondents reported that training was highly effective and only 21 per cent of respondents were of low effectiveness group. The findings of the study were in agreement with the results obtained by Ebrahim et al., (2017). From the analysis it can be conclude that training conducted in aspirational districts were effective to some extent only and were rated as average. Since, lot of money and human resources were utilized in conducting a training programme still lot of scope is there for further scaling up of skill trainings in aspirational districts.

The effectiveness was further measured based on eight different aspects of training programme. It can be observed from the Table 2 that 'coverage' with weighted mean score of 2.125 and 'appropriateness of training' with weighted mean score of 2.166 were the most important aspects of training which were found to be effective and ranked rank 1 and 2 respectively. 'Physical facility' with weighed mean score of 2.025, 'competency of trainers' with weighed mean score of 2.016, 'Skill development aspects' with weighed mean score of 2.008 and 'Utility' with weighed mean score of 1.991 were ranked 3,4,5 and 6 respectively. Table also reveals that training effective was low in 'quality' and 'need assessment' aspects with weighted mean score of 1.966 and 1.925 respectively. It can be concluded that training programmes were more focused on covering training syllabus, but least effective in analysing the training needs of trainees. Singh et al., (2019) also reported skill enhancement from training. Nain and Bhagat (2005) reported that training led to adoption of trench vegetable technology.

Perceived benefits of training

Respondents were asked to respond on the perceived benefits of training programmes and the results are given in Table 3. Gain in skill and increase in knowledge were found to be the most important benefits as perceived by the respondents from training. A majority of respondents (56.66%) perceived that they were highly benefited in terms of gain in the skills with a WMS of 2.42, followed by increase in knowledge (45%) with WMS of 2.34 which were ranked first and second among the perceived benefits respectively. Moreover, it was found that 36.66 per cent respondents were of perception that they have gained enough information to start a new enterprise as a result of skill training which was ranked third. Only 26.66 per cent of respondents perceived that training program was

Table 2. Effectiveness of different aspects of skill development trainings.

S.No.	Training aspects	Low	Medium	High	WMS	Rank
1	Quality	21	82	17	1.966	VII
2	Utility	24	73	23	1.991	VI
3	Coverage	19	67	34	2.125	I
4	Physical facilities	20	77	23	2.025	III
5	Competency of trainers	14	90	16	2.016	IV
6	Skill development aspects	28	63	29	2.008	V
7	Appropriateness of trainee	12	82	26	2.116	II
8	Need assessment of trainees	27	75	18	1.925	VIII

Table 3. Benefits of training programmes as perceived by the respondents

S.No.	Training Benefits	Highly		Moderately		Low (not)		WMS	Rank
		F	P	F	P	F	P		
1	Increase in knowledge	54	45	53	44.16	13	10.83	2.34	II
2	Gain in skills	68	56.66	35	29.16	17	14.16	2.42	I
3	Increase in income	32	26.66	50	41.66	38	31.66	1.95	IV
4	Enhancement in entrepreneurial ability	44	36.66	56	46.66	20	16.66	2.30	III

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis of independent variables with training effectiveness.

S.No	Variables	Unstandardized B	Coefficient Std. Error	Standardized Co-efficient Beta	t	Sig.
	(Constant)	35.536	4.363		8.145	0.000
1	Age	0.004	0.039	0.007	0.101	0.920
2	Education	0.940	2.476	0.027	0.380	0.705
3	Annual Income	0.000	.000	0.107	1.162	0.317
4	No of training program attended.	0.900	0.395	0.190	2.275	0.025**
5	Operational land holding	-0.125	0.102	-0.099	-1.22	0.225
6	Extension contact	0.13	0.103	0.007	0.127	0.899
7	Mass media exposure	0.121	0.147	0.50	0.823	0.413
8	Learning motivation	0.565	0.204	0.222	2.774	0.007*
9	Economic motivation	-0.165	0.173	-0.061	-0.95	0.341
10	Innovativeness	0.414	0.178	0.158	2.320	0.022**
11	Motivation to transfer learning	0.462	0.186	0.189	2.481	0.015**
12	Self-efficacy	0.442	0.171	0.190	2.583	0.011**
13	Achievement motivation	0.340	0.104	0.224	3.283	0.001*
14	Risk orientation	0.145	0.127	0.074	1.138	0.258

*****Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, **Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level, Adjusted r-square = 0.628

highly helpful in terms of increase in income. The result shows that although trainings increased knowledge and skill of large number of respondents, only few of them are ready to start new enterprise or diversify their farming system. As a result, respondents were less benefited in terms of increased income. These findings are in agreement with findings of Singh and Singh (2014), where majority of trainees could not utilize gained knowledge and skill into actual practice. Jaiswal et al., (2019) and Kobba et al., 2020) reported similar benefits. This may be due to high risk involved in initiation of new enterprises. If further financial, technical and marketing support will be provided to respondents, they will definitely try new enterprises or go for diversification of existing enterprises.

Multiple linear regression analysis

The regression coefficient value obtained from multiple linear regression analysis of independent variable with training effectiveness is presented in Table 4. It revealed that out of 14 independent variables, eight variables *viz.*, Age, education, annual income, operational land holding, extension contact, mass media exposure, economic motivation and risk orientation were found to be non-significantly contributing to the training effectiveness. The independent variable like no of training attended, innovativeness, motivation to transfer learning and self-efficacy were showed positive and significant contribution toward training effectiveness at 0.05 level of probability. The remaining two variables viz. learning motivation and achievement motivation were observed to be have positive and significant contribution to training effectiveness at 0.001 level of probability. Thus, for every one unit increase the independent variables no of training programmes attended, learning motivation, innovativeness, motivation to transfer learning, self-efficacy and achievement motivation the training effectiveness will increase by 0.900, 0.565, 0.414, 0.462, 0.442, and 0.340 units respectively. The R-square value of 0.628 also shows that all the independent variables jointly explain the training effectiveness to the extent of 62.8 per cent.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the above study that different training institutes were conducted number of skill trainings in aspirational districts to farmers and agricultural labourers which were found to be moderately effective. But there were some areas of concern where progress was limited. Most of the training conducted were not based on participatory need assessment, instead major focuses were on the coverage of training curriculum. Majority of the trainees perceived those trainings were resulted in gaining of knowledge and skill. But only few of the trainees ready to become an entrepreneur from the acquired skills. Hence, there is a need to motivate, train and support the trainees to adopt the acquired skill in diversification of farms and setting up of new ventures. Training institutes should also take a follow up action after the completion of the training. Government should also support with policies and measures to encourage the trained individuals by linking them with the financial institutes.

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