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A Study on the Impact of ANGRAU Supported Reliance Foundation Information Services on Beneficiary Farmers

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ABSTRACT

ANGRAU is technically supporting Reliance Foundation Information Services (RFIS) being implemented in Andhra Pradesh in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. The study was conducted as part of M. Sc (Ag.) programme during 2018-19. The study was conducted in Guntur district with a sample size of 120 respondents. Impact was referred to the effect that was created on the respondent as a result of RFIS. Impact of RFIS was studied in terms of technical, economic and social aspects. The overall impact of RFIS was calculated by summing the individual respondents scores on technical, economic and social impact. It was found that two third of the respondents were observed in medium (66.66%) impact category, followed by high (17.50%) and low (15.84%).

Key Words: *Impact, Public Private Partnership, Reliance Foundation Information Services*

Today, transfer of technology in extension system is done by multiple service providers including both public and private institutions responding to the multifaceted demands, problems and needs of the farmers. But one can never forget the role played by public extension system in attaining self reliance in food production in green revolution. Even for doubling of farmers' income also the public extension system has a lead role to play. Acharya N. G. Ranga Agricultural University situated in Andhra Pradesh is a public sector organization working for the welfare of the farming community. The motto behind serving famers is to aid them in their development and in improving their farm income. And now it is working towards doubling of the farmers income.

Reliance Foundation Information Services (RFIS) is providing critical information to farmers using various communication channels. It has identified that farmers need right information, at right time, from right source for right decision making in order to increase their farm income. Keeping in view the importance of public organizations in reforming Agricultural extension services, Reliance Foundation approached ANGRAU to be the knowledge partner for its Information Services Programme. During 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between ANGRAU and Reliance Foundation for implementing Information Services Programme for the benefit of farmers in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.

ANGRAU with the technical support from its Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), District Agricultural Advisory and Transfer of Technology Centres (DAATTCs), Agricultural Research Stations (ARS) is providing technical support to Reliance Foundation Information Services (RFIS) being implemented in all the districts of Andhra Pradesh with highest number of users in Guntur district. Hence the study was conducted in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.

RFIS is disseminating the agricultural information though mobile text messages, mobile voice messages, knowledge on wheels programme, video conference, field awareness programmes, toll free number (1800 419 8800), phone in live, veterinary camps, bulletins & broadcasts and jio chat.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted as a part of M.Sc (Ag.) programme in Andhra Pradesh state during the year 2018-2019. Ex-post facto research design was used. The study was conducted in Guntur district with a sample size of 120 respondents. The data was collected using an interview schedule. In the study impact was referred to the effect that was created on the respondent as a result of RFIS. Impact of RFIS was studied in terms of technical, economic and social aspects. The positive changes that has been brought about as a result of technology introduction is referred to technological impact. As a result of RFIS the increase in net income is referred to economic impact. The additional net income received by the respondents may be utilized for various social needs termed as social impact.

The individual respondent scores on the three components namely technological impact, economic impact and social impact were summed up to get the individual respondents total score of the impact of RFIS. The high score means higher impact of the RFIS

Table 1. Technical and economic impact of RFIS on the respondents (n=120)

S. No.	Item	Technical		Economic	
		F	%	F	%
1	Land preparation	32	26.67	30	25
2	Selection of crops	62	51.67	59	49.17
3	Selection of varieties	42	35	67	55.83
4	Sowing time	75	62.5	72	60
5	Soil testing & soil test based fertilizer application	108	90	101	84.17
6	Weed management	79	65.83	75	62.5
7	Irrigation scheduling	44	36.67	49	40.83
8	Intercultural operations	73	60.83	85	70.83
9	Pest management	87	72.5	98	81.67
10	Disease management	103	85.83	83	69.17
11	Farm mechanization	51	42.5	52	43.33
12	Labour management	54	45	50	41.67
13	Harvesting	94	78.33	91	75.83
14	Drying and storage	69	57.5	64	53.33
15	Weather related information	108	90	105	87.5
16	Marketing	65	54.17	65	54.17
17	Governmental schemes	81	67.5	76	63.33
18	Credit and finance	54	45	50	41.67
19	Insurance	98	81.67	96	80

Table 2. Social impact of RFIS on the respondents (n=120)

S. No.	Category	F	%
1	Children education		
a	Shift from govt. School to private school	13	10.83
b	Shit to a good school	15	12.5
c	Special coaching and tuitions	18	15
d	Regular fee payment	37	30.83
e	Others (please mention)	--	--
2	Family health		
A	Shift from govt. hospital to private hospital for treatment	12	10
B	Shift to good hospital for health check up	16	13.33
C	Increased concern on health check ups	31	25.83
D	Others (please mention)		
3	Employment generation- Establishment of an enterprise	6	5
4	Material purchased		
a	TV	32	26.67
b	Fridge	37	30.83
c	Cooler	53	44.17
d	Air conditioner	14	11.67
e	Furniture	18	15
f	New clothes for family members	62	51.67
g	Other home needs	35	29.17
5	Repair/remodelling of existing house	3	2.5
6	Bank savings	8	6.67
7	Reinvested in agriculture	83	69.17

*F=Frequency %= Per cent * Multiple responses

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to the overall impact of RFIS (n=120)

S. No.	Category	F	%
1	Low (<70.08)	19	15.84
2	Medium (70.08-88.18)	80	66.66
3	High (> 88.18)	21	17.5
	Total	120	100
Mean = 79.13		SD= 9.05	

*F=Frequency %= Per cent

on the respondent. Using mean and standard deviation as a measure of check, the respondents were classified into three categories as low (< mean- SD), medium (mean ±SD) and high (> mean+SD). Statistical tools namely mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Technical and economic impact of ANGRAU supported RFIS

It is evident from Table 1 that greater proportion of the respondents expressed that they were technically benefitted from the information on weather, soil testing & soil test based fertilizer application (90.00%) made significant impact, followed by disease management (85.83%), insurance (81.67%), harvesting (78.33%), pest management (72.50%), governmental schemes (67.50%), weed management (65.83%), sowing time (62.50%), intercultural operations (60.83%), drying and storage (57.50) marketing (54.17%), selection of crops (51.67%), farm mechanization (42.50%), labour management, credit & finance (45.00%), irrigation scheduling (36.67%), selection of varieties (35.00%) and land preparation (26.67%).

The top three items where the respondents perceived to have more of technical impact were soil testing & soil test based fertilizer application, weather related information and disease management. This indicates that these are the areas where farmers lack technicality, hence such areas should be identified and farmer's capacity building programmes should be organized.

Greater proportion of the respondents expressed that they were economically benefitted from weather related information (87.50%), followed by soil testing & soil test based fertilizer application (84.17%), pest management (81.67%), insurance (80.00%), harvesting (75.83%), intercultural operations (70.83%), disease management (69.17%), governmental schemes (63.33%), weed management (62.50%), sowing time (60.00%), selection of varieties (55.83%), marketing (54.17%), drying and storage (53.33%), selection of crops (49.17%), farm mechanization (43.33%), credit & finance, labour management (41.67%), irrigation scheduling (40.83%) and land preparation (25.00%).

The top three items where the respondents perceived to have more of economic impact were soil testing & soil test based fertilizer application, weather related information and pest management. Experts should note that information on these aspects should be delivered timely to avoid economic loss to the farmers

Social impact of ANGRAU supported RFIS

With regard to children education it was evident from Table 2 that less than one third of the respondents were able to pay fees regularly (30.83%) as a result of RFIS, followed by put their children in special coaching &tuitions (15.00%), shift to a good school (12.50%) and shift from govt. School to private school (10.83%). Regarding family health more than one fourth of the respondents could increase their concern on health checkups (25.83%), followed by they could make a shift to good hospital for health check-up (13.33%)and were able to shift from govt. hospital to private hospital for treatment (10.00%). A meager proportion of the respondents could establish their own enterprise (5.00%). They were able to purchase materials like new clothes for family members (51.67%), cooler (44.17%), fridge (30.83%), other home needs (29.17%), TV (26.67%), furniture (15.00%) and air conditioner (11.67%).the respondents were also able to repair/ remodel the existing house (2.50%), followed by bank savings (6.67%) and reinvested in agriculture (69.17%). The results are in conformity with that reported by Palanisamy (2011); Balaji (2014).

The economic benefits obtained as a result of practicing RFIS agro advisories were invested for various social purposes by the farmers. In a real sense, impact is reflected in social terms. Efforts should be made to strengthen the effectiveness of RFIS there by technical and economic impact paving way for social impact.

Overall impact of ANGRAU supported RFIS

It could concluded from the Table 3 that two third of the respondents were observed in medium (66.66%) impact category, followed by high (17.50%) and low (15.84%). The results are in conformity with that reported by Jatav *et al. (*2010); Sowjanya *et al. (*2018) and Chavhan (2019).The results correspond to the technical, economic and social impact created by RFIS on the respondents. The respondents are observed in all the categories of low, medium and high but the least proportion are found in low impact

category, and major proportion of the respondents fell in the categories of medium and high. It is a positive sign that RFIS has created a considerable impact on the clientele. Agro advisories should be in such a way that they create technical impact and economic impact on the beneficiaries paving way for social impact.

CONCLUSION

It could be concluded that the results on impact of RFIS correspond to the technical, economic and social impact created by RFIS on the respondents. The respondents are observed in all the categories of low, medium and high but the least proportion are found in low impact category and major proportion of the respondents fell in the categories of medium and high. It is a positive sign that RFIS has created a considerable impact on the clientele. Agro advisories should be in such a way that they create technical impact and economic impact on the beneficiaries paving way for social impact

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