



A Study on Knowledge level on System of Rice Intensification in Nagapattinam District of Tamil Nadu

Key words: Knowledge, SRI technology, Rice

Tamil Nadu is considered as one of the leading rice producing and consuming states of India. It occupies 7% of the nation's population, 4% of the land area and 3% of the water resources at all India level. The annual average rain fall at all India level is 1200 mm whereas the rainfall in Tamil Nadu is 930 mm. In this situation, the land and other natural resources are fully utilized in this State. The average land holding was 1.25 hectares during 1976-77 and it is 0.83 hectares as per 2005-06 censuses which is lower than the all India average of 1.33Ha. Thus, 91 per cent farmers in Tamil Nadu are small and marginal farmers. Of the total geographical area of 130 lakh hectares, around 51 lakh hectares are the net cultivated area. About 28.63 lakh hectares constituted the net irrigated area and the balance area of 22.37 lakh hectares is rainfed. So it was felt necessary to adopt a low water consuming rice production technology to attain the targets of National Food Security Mission. Thus System of Rice Intensification was introduced by the State Government.

SRI is a method of increasing the yield of rice. It is also possible to apply the same method to other crops and vegetables for getting higher yield. So it is important to study the knowledge level of SRI farmers. This study reveals the gap in the knowledge level of the farmers. It is possible to evolve strategies to bridge the knowledge gap among the farmers. It has a wider scope and the study will give location specific solutions to the problems pertained in the study area. This would help the extension personnel to concentrate on promoting this technology and this could be helpful for the policy making and strategy alteration.

The study was conducted in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu. Nagapattinam district was purposively selected for the study because of the following reasons.

- i. It is one of the leading rice producing districts of Tamil Nadu as it lies in the Cauvery Delta zone.
- ii. It ranked first in SRI paddy Coverage for the period of 2011-12 in the Tamil Nadu. This study was aimed at revealing the levels of knowledge on SRI technology by the respondents.

Selection of the Blocks:

Out of eleven blocks from the Nagapattinam district four blocks (Thalainayar, Keelaiyur, Sembanarkoil, Sirkali) were purposively selected to represent the north and southern parts of the districts according to the highest area under SRI.

Selection of Village:

Three villages from each selected block (Kadanthethi, Neermulai, Sithaimoor from Thalainayar block; Eesanoor, Karapidagai, Valakkarai from Keelaiyur block; Akkur, Keelaperumpallam, Sembanarkoil from Sembanarkoil block; Kathiruppu, Kaveripoompattinam, Karkoil from Sirkali block)) were purposively selected according to the highest area under SRI.

Selection of respondents:

From each village 10 farmers were selected by following simple random sampling procedure, thus making a total of 120 respondents.

Knowledge level of the respondents was studied by a well-structured, standardised and pre-tested knowledge test schedule developed for the study.

In order to assess the overall knowledge level of the respondents, necessary data were

collected and they were categorized into three groups viz., low, medium and high using cumulative frequency method.

Results of the study revealed that majority of the respondents (56.67 %) had medium level of knowledge followed by high (30.83 %) and low (12.50 %) levels of knowledge in SRI technology. It is in conformity with the findings of Balakrishnan and Vasanthakumar (2010) and Thiyagarajan (2011).

The possible reason for medium to high level of knowledge on the recommended SRI cultivation practices might be due to their higher literacy level, medium level of scientific orientation and adequate farming experience. The respondents want to increase their farm income; this would have motivated them to gain more knowledge on SRI cultivation practices. Further, the State Department of Agriculture with an augmented effort to implement this technology on massive scale directed the agricultural scientists, extension machinery and NGOs to take part. They installed boards to advertise this very task every kilometre. No one can go without taking a look at those metal boards. The lucrative subsidies given by the government made the farmers to enquire about this technology. And finally the response of the extension was deliberated by the scientists. They conducted on-farm demonstrations, one day training on all components of this technology and issued some leaflets and folders etc.

Implementation of an innovation in massive levels would be a difficult job but it is possible in the case of SRI. Though it had lost sheen over the years after implemented at various phases and

timings across India, It required some sort of assistance for re-introduction i.e. renaming, customizing the components and subsidising to some extent. This would have contributed for the medium to high level of knowledge among majority of the respondents.

The results showed that, frequent interactions of the farmers with extension functionaries lead to the formation of a favourable opinion on SRI cultivation and its adoption. Being a new method, wide gaps in the knowledge about SRI were noticed among the respondents especially about application of fertilizers. More focus needs to be given to reduce the knowledge gaps and for developing user friendly implements for weeding. Hence, there is an immediate need to promote SRI method of cultivation, focusing more on imparting the principles of SRI during the training programmes and demonstrations, skill development among rural youth and farmers.

LITERATURE CITED

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