Evaluation of Farmer Field School (FFS) on groundnut in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, India

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Farmer Field School (FFS) is a capacity building method based on adult education principles for a group of farmers, usually comprises of 25-30. It is best described as a **'school without walls'**, where farmers learn through observation and experimentation in their own fields. FFS aims to increase their knowledge and skills about crop management practices.

FFS has been launched by the Government of Andhra Pradesh in the name of 'Polambadi' through department of agriculture, where the emphasis was given to use ecofriendly measures for control of crop pests. In India 4,35,098 FFSs were organized from 1994 to 2013 and in Andhra Pradesh 12,603 FFSs were organized from 2004 to 2013. In Chittoor district, during 2009 to 2012, about 805 Farmer Field Schools were organized in groundnut by department of Agriculture.

The study was conducted in the year 2012 - 2013 in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. An *ex–post–facto* research design was used in the present study. Andhra Pradesh and Chittoor district were selected purposively in India since groundnut area is maximum in South India and Chittoor district in particular. Twelve mandals were selected in Chittoor district randomly for the study. From each mandal one village was selected randomly, thus making a total of 12 villages. Ten participant and ten non participant farmers were selected from each selected village by following random sampling method, thus, making a sample size of 240 i.e. 120 participant and 120 non participant farmers.

Data collected from the respondents by using an interview schedule developed for the study based on the objectives. The data collected were coded, tabulated and analyzed statistically using SPSS package and results were interpreted accordingly.

Majority of participant and non participant farmers of groundnut polambadi (FFS) were distributed under medium socio economic status, farming experience, innovativeness, extension participation, achievement motivation, mass media exposure, management orientation, economic orientation, information input behavior, information process behavior and information output behavior.

Majority of participant farmers of groundnut polambadi (FFS) were having medium level of knowledge and skills followed by high and low. Majority of participant farmers of groundnut polambadi (FFS) were distributed under medium adoption category followed by high and low. Whereas, majority of non participant farmers were having medium level of knowledge, skills and adoption followed by low and high.

Majority of participant farmers of groundnut polambadi (FFS) were belonged to medium yield and economic returns category followed by high and low respectively, whereas majority of non participant farmers were belonged to medium yield and economic returns category followed by low and high categories.

The 't' test result confirmed that there was significant difference in knowledge, skills, adoption, yield levels and economic returns of participant and non participant farmers of groundnut polambadi (FFS).

All the selected independent variables i.e. socio economic status, farming experience, innovativeness, extension participation, achievement motivation, mass media exposure, management orientation, economic orientation, information input behavior, information process behavior and

information output behavior of participant farmers of groundnut polambadi (FFS) were found to be positively significant with the knowledge, skills and adoption

Farming experience and innovativeness of participant farmers of groundnut polambadi (FFS) with the yield level were found to be positively significant. Farming experience, innovativeness, extension participation and information output behavior were found to be positively significant with economic returns of participant farmers of groundnut polambadi (FFS).

It is concluded that polambadi (FFS) is an effective extension tool in dissemination of agricultural technologies to farming community. It is recommended that polambadi (FFS) should be encouraged as an intensive teaching method among farmers for transfer of technology in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh in particular and in India general.