

Impact of Skill Enhancement Trainings of Crop Maximization Project on Agricultural Development of Small Farmers of District Charsadda Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa (KP) Pakistan

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Abstract: The present research study is carried out under the title “the impact of skill enhancement trainings of Crop Maximization Project on the agriculture development of small farmers of district Charsadda”. The main objective of the paper is to know about the impact of skill enhancement trainings on the agriculture development of small farmers. Two union councils i.e. Rajjar-II and Sarki Tetara were selected for this research study. A sample size of 150 respondents was purposively selected from the research universe. The data were collected through pre-tested interview schedule. The collected data were analyzed through SPSS. For showing the association and relationships between variables, the Chi-square, Fisher Exact Test, t-test and Gamma Statistics were used. The project initiated the skill enhancement intervention to enhance the skills of small farmers to make them able to utilize the modern technology and practices to develop their small scale agriculture. The research found that the major portion (84.7%) of the small farmers of the targeted area got benefits from the skill enhancement training intervention of the project. About 15.3% of the respondents got no benefits from the said intervention. Though the skill enhancement training intervention of the project not benefited all the small farmers of the targeted area uniformly, still its impact on the overall small scale agriculture of the area was very effective and productive. This indicates that for developing the agriculture sector especially the small scale agriculture, the capacity building of small farmers is of high importance.

Keyterms: Agriculture development, Crop Maximization project, skill enhancement trainings, modern technology and practice.

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I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Skill enhancement refers to enhancing the human knowledge, capabilities, thinking power and the competency to utilize it for the development of their own self and society (Ahmad, 2007). Skill enhancement or Skill development is a broader term, apart from the technical, vocational, agricultural education and trainings; it also includes productive competencies that are acquired through each stage of learning and training, to make the people competent to become the valuable and productive members of their family. Moreover they become able of, to use the resources and adopt the practices of modern economy to play their dynamic part in livelihood activities and contend in existing labor market (Mehta, 2009). In agriculture sector, especially at small scale agriculture the skill enhancement trainings play very key role in increasing the crop productivity of small farmers. The skill enhancement trainings make them capable of to use the modern technology and practices in better way. Furthermore the skillful small farmers can minimize the pre and post crop harvest lost to great extent, which positively affect their crop productivity (Durga, 2015). Like other developing countries of the world, Pakistan is also an agricultural country. About 66% of the country’s population depending on agriculture for their livelihood. Therefore, improvement in the life standard of people of such countries is dependent on agricultural development. It provides employment to about 43.6% of the total workforce and share 21% in the country’s GDP. From the standpoint of employment, agriculture sector has engaged the largest portion of population’s labor force for livelihood earning. Greater part of the total labor force consists of unskilled small farmers. Resultantly the pre and post harvest crop loss is very high; additionally their skill capability by no means permitted them to utilize advanced agriculture practices and technology. They merely rely on

conventional agriculture techniques. That's why their farm productivity affects severely. To cut down the pre and post harvest crop loss and to increase the agricultural productivity through modern agricultural practices and technology, the small farmers should be provided skill enhancement trainings (Ahmad, 2007). History shows that the farm productivity of the small farmers of developed countries is always higher than that of the small farmers of the developing countries. The main reason behind this is the capacity building differences among them. The small farmers in the developed countries are well equipped with modern skills and techniques of agriculture as compared to the small farmers in developing countries (Rosset, 1999). Similarly, the available statistics indicated that over 70% of the world food is produced by small farmers. It shows the deep rooted involvement of small farmers in the agriculture sector. This huge role of small farmers in agriculture sector suggests that they should be provided the modern skills of agriculture to make sure their agriculture production enhancement (Wolfenson, 2013). According to Comer, (1990) agricultural development is the major factor responsible for changing the social, cultural and economic conditions of small farmers. Agriculture development is only possible to adopt the modern agriculture techniques to produce more crops and to reduce the pre and post harvest lost. All these are only possible when the small farmers are provided the advanced skill enhancement trainings. Moreover it was observed by Mehta, (2009) that about 90% of the small farmers around the world are involved in small scale agriculture. Majority of them are unskilled and are relying on the poor and traditional agricultural practices. Resultantly their crop productivity is very low and mostly the small farmers and rural people are facing food insecurity problems. He further suggested that to increase the crop productivity of small farmers, the governments and the developmental organizations should build their capacity especially in the field of modern technology and practices. Skill development trainings are equally significant for small farmers to upscale their conventional subsistence agriculture in to modern and commercial agriculture. This indicated that skill enhancement trainings have great contribution in increase in crop production and in improving the socio-economic conditions of small farmers (Noor, 2011). The small farmers both male and female of the developing countries are confronting fast growing problems and challenges in agriculture sector i.e. the low productivity, low socio-economic conditions, conventional method of agriculture and less use of modern technology. These challenges can be address through proper capacity building of small farmers (Durga, 2015). Mufukata, (2015) revealed that due to the advanced skills deficiencies, the small farmers of the developing countries are mainly relying on conventional and subsistence nature of agriculture. That's why their yield has not increased to great extent over the years. Their agriculture system can be developed through building their capacity. Furthermore Egwu, (2003) studied that the small scale agriculture system in developing countries are very vulnerable. He find out that this vulnerability could be removed by building the practical capacity of small farmers. It was also observed by Khattak, (2016) that for the small scale agriculture development the small farmers should be provided the skill enhancement trainings opportunities. According to ILO report, (2011) both male and female small farmers are the major stakeholder at small scale agriculture. The report further indicated that the huge differences in crop production between the small scale agriculture of advanced and developing countries has been noted. The main cause of these differences is because of the differences in the skills level among the small farmers. The report suggested that the small scale agriculture of developing countries could be also developed by building the capacity of their small farmers. Dola, (2011) also reported that skill enhancement opportunities has immense importance even than financial support in case of small farmers for their agriculture development. The study further indicated that for better management and performing of Farm activities the skill enhancement of small farmers are of high value. Ahmed, (2007) observed that the governments and developmental organizations assumed agriculture related skill enhancing trainings as one of the main sector of agriculture development. The development agents believe that the agricultural and socio-economic development of small farmers couldn't be achieved until and unless the skills of the small farmers are not harnessed (Ahmad, 2007). It is therefore keeping in consideration the importance of skill enhancement trainings in the small scale agriculture development. The government of Pakistan launched Crop Maximization Project in 2008 to 2012 in all unites of the country. The target group of the project was small farmers. This was a multisectoral project. Skill enhancement training intervention was one of the sectors included in the project for small farmers (Khan, 2012). District Charsadda was also included in project's universe. The present research study is carried out to examine the impact of skill enhancement trainings of the Crop Maximization Project on the agricultural development of small farmers of district Charsadda.

Hypothesis of the study: There is no significant association between the Skill enhancement trainings of Crop Maximization Project and the Agricultural development of small farmers.

Objectives of the Study:

The main objective of this research study was to know about the impact of the skill enhancement trainings of Crop Maximization Project on the agriculture development of small farmers of district Charsadda.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS USED:

This research study was carried out in union council Rajjar-II and union council Sarki Tetara of district and Tehsil Charsadda. The present research study was conducted to know about the impact of skill enhancement intervention of Crop Maximization Project on the agriculture development of small farmers of district Charsadda. The data were collected through Pre-tested interview schedule from 150 respondents. They were selected purposively through random sampling method from the particular universe. Later on SPSS were used for tabulation and analysis of the collected data. Furthermore the Chi-square, Fisher Exact Test, T-test and Gamma Statistics were used for showing the association and relationship between the variables.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table No.01 Any Skill Enhancement Trainings Opportunities were Available to Small Farmers Before the Crop Maximization Project?

Before CMP Trainings were Available	Frequency	Percent
Yes	9	6.0
No	141	94.0
Total	150	100.0

The data in table no. 01 shows the availability of training opportunities before the crop maximization project. Only 6% of the respondents were of the views that in pre project era trainings opportunities were available while the 94% of the respondents denied the availability of any training before the initiation of the said project. Prasad, (2015) demonstrated that small farmers every where in the world are skills and resources deficient. The governments and the developmental organizations need to focus on small farmers. By providing maximum number of skill enhancement trainings opportunities to them can help in developing their small scale agriculture. Furthermore it will ensure the food security world wide through increase in crop production. The analyzed data indicates that some of the respondents had already availed agriculture related skill enhancement trainings opportunities in past from different governmental and developmental organizations but its ratio is very low. On other hand the major portion of the respondents had never avail any training to improve their skills in agriculture field.

Table No.02 Crop Maximization Project Provided Trainings to Small Farmers

Trainings	Frequency	Percent
Yes	134	89.3
No	16	10.7
Total	150	100.0

Table no. 02 indicates the status of Crop Maximization Project skill enhancement trainings. Majority of (89.3%) of the targeted small farmers reported that they had been trained by the said project under the skill development program. While a small portion about 10.7% of the respondents got no benefits from the skill enhancement intervention of the project. The skilled workers are the key to success in every sector. According to Rao, (1995) skill enhancement trainings of small farmers are indispensable for the development of small scale agriculture and for eradicating the lingering poverty from among them. Furthermore Alila, (2006) described that by providing the modern skills of agriculture to small farmers helps in land preparation, land leveling, use of new technology and practices, use of balance fertilizers, pest management in sustainable manner, income diversification interventions etc. Resultantly the small scale agriculture developed and the small farmers' productivity increased many times. Bushra, (2017) also revealed that for the small scale agriculture development the harnessing of small farmers skills is of high importance. Keeping in consideration the importance of skill enhancement trainings for the small scale agriculture development, Crop Maximization Project initiated a comprehensive skill enhancement program for the small farmers of the targeted area. Major portion of the targeted small farmers got variety of skill enhancement trainings. A very little number of the small farmers remain deprived from the particular intervention.

Table No.03 Types of Trainings Provided by Crop Maximization Project to Small Farmers

Type of Trainings Got	Frequency	Percent
Community Management Skill Training	33	22.0
Revolving fund Management Training	20	13.3
Farmer Field School Training	56	37.3
Training Workshop	25	16.7
Got No Training	16	10.7
Total	150	100.0

The data in table No. 03 shows the information regarding the type of trainings provided by the Crop Maximization Project to small farmers of the targeted area. About 22% of the respondents got the community management trainings. The 13.3% of them got revolving fund management trainings, 37.3% respondents took part in farmers field school trainings, 16.7% benefited from the awareness workshops. About 10.7% of the respondents received no training. Skill enhancement trainings harness people potential. Durga (2015) observed that agriculture is a multi-sectoral field and its development required multi types of capacity trainings. Moreover Bajwa, (2007) revealed that small farmers are the most marginalized and unaware sect of the society. That is the main reason behind their low agriculture productivity. To increase their crop production, they should be provided variety of trainings to harness their potential in all related field. It was also studied by Hassan, (2002) that only the skillful and knowledgeable small farmers can handle and manage the challenges of fast growing food and economic demands. According to him the small scale agriculture is the only mean of survival for small farmers. So the capacity of the small farmers should be build to develop their small scale agriculture in better way. The Crop Maximization Project also initiated variety of trainings for the capacity building of small farmers to make them able to develop their agriculture. Major portion of the respondents got the trainings best suited them for the improvement in their agriculture. Some of the respondents got no training.

Table No.04 Contribution of Skill Enhancement Trainings to Agricultural Development of Small Farmers

Contribution	Frequency	Percent
Yes	127	84.7
No	23	15.3
Total	150	100.0

Table no.04, provides the information about the contribution of the skill enhancement trainings of the Crop Maximization project in the agriculture development of small farmers of the targeted area. Major portion (84.7%) of the small farmers agreed with the contribution of skill enhancement trainings of the project in their agriculture development. The minor portion of 15.3% of the small farmers disagreed with any contribution of the said trainings in their agriculture development. Similarly, Noor, (2011) observed that agriculture related skill enhancement trainings play very key role in the increase in crop productivity and overall improvement in agriculture sector especially at small scale agriculture. it was also observed by Hazell, (2006) that the speed of agriculture development process could be expedite through build the capacity of farmers especially small farmers by providing them effective skill enhancement trainings. The Crop Maximization Project capacity building trainings contributed a lot to the agriculture development of small famers of the targeted areas. Majority of the respondents utilized the acquired trainings in better way and improve their agriculture system. Still some of the small farmers of the targeted area remain deprived and bring no change in their prevailing agriculture system.

Table No.05 Cross tabulation showing association between “Skill Enhancement Trainings” and “Agriculture Development” of small farmers

Skill Enhancement Trainings Contribute to Agricultural Development	The Agricultural Development of Small Farmers				Total	Statistics
	To Some Extent	To Greater Extent	To Less Extent	No Change Occur		
Yes or No	To Some Extent	To Greater Extent	To Less Extent	No Change Occur	Total	Statistics
Yes	80	20	13	11	124	Chi-square value 32.612 P-value 0.00 Gamma value 0.00
No	7	0	13	6	26	
Total	7	20	26	17	150	

In the above table no. 05, two variables, dependent variable “agriculture development” and independent variable “skill enhancement trainings” were cross tabulated. For the analysis of data Chi-square and Gamma statistics were applied. Chi-square value 32.612 and P-value 0.00 indicated that there is significant association between dependent and independent variables. From Chi-square value and P-value, it is concluded that the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. Furthermore the Gamma value (0.00) shows that

there is direct relationship between dependent and independent variables. From the analyzed data it is concluded that agriculture development and skill enhancement trainings has very close relationship. More trainings opportunities to small farmers will increase the chance of their agricultural development. Through skill enhancement trainings, the potential of small farmers could be harnessed in better way. Resultantly, they could become able to utilize the available resource in sustainable manner and also can minimize the chance of pre and post harvest lost through proper use of modern agriculture practices and technology. It could pave the way for their agriculture development. Majority of the small farmers of the projected area were unskilled and unaware about the modern agriculture practices and technology. That's why they were relying on subsistence and conventional nature of agriculture. The initiation of the Crop Maximization project provided them the opportunity to build their capacity through variety of agriculture related skill enhancement trainings to convert their subsistence and conventional agriculture to modern and commercial agriculture system. Majority of the small farmers got the skill enhancement trainings of the project. The overall impact of the trainings provided by the project to small farmers of the targeted area was encouraging. They utilized the acquired skills for their agriculture development and increased their productivity. Though some of them either not got the capacity building trainings of the project or not utilized it in proper way to develop their small scale agriculture. It indicates that agriculture development of small farmers has significant association and direct relation with skill enhancement trainings.

IV. CONCLUSION:

The research was conducted on the impact of the skill enhancement trainings of crop maximization project on the agriculture development of small farmers of district Charsadda. The main objective of the research was to know about the role of the skill enhancement trainings in agriculture development of small farmers. The basic assumption that guided the present research work has supported the statement is that there is significant association between the skill enhancement training of the small farmers and their agricultural development. The general secretaries and presidents of the village organizations got revolving fund management and community management skill trainings for the better operation of their respective village organizations. Some were provided Farmer field school trainings for the better management of crops. Moreover respondents were trained through awareness seminars and workshops. Majority of the small farmers got benefits from the skill enhancement trainings of the project and developed their small scale agriculture. While some of them bring no change in their small scale agriculture even after the completion of the project. Because they either not utilized the acquired trainings in proper manner or either not got the initiated trainings of the project. It is therefore concluded that though the skill enhancement intervention of the project has not benefited all the targeted small farmers at same manner, still it imprints good results in developing the agriculture sector of the small farmers as compare with the pre-project era.

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