

The Impact on Training of Farmers Training Centers on Farmer's Productivity: The Case of Dire Teyara and Sofi Woredas-Harari Region-Ethiopia

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Abstract: Farmers training centers (FTCs) are an emerging extension strategy geared towards human capital development through need-based, hands-on practical training in order to facilitate agricultural transformation and rural livelihood improvement. Although FTCs were established and made functional in Ethiopia-Harari Regional State and Dire Teyara and Sofi Woredas, no systematic assessment of the impacts of training were made. Unless the situation of farmers is improved farming system and practices, and ultimately, improved and sustainable livelihoods, all efforts made will be unrewarded. Hence, to alleviate this problem, educating farmers through basic education intervention and training on improved farming systems are important. This paper was initiated to fill the gap in Farmers Training Centre's.

Keywords: Farmers, Extension Strategy, Systematic Assessment, Education Intervention.

I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture occupies a key position in the Ethiopian economy and more than 90 percent of agricultural production is generated from the peasant sector. Agriculture provides livelihoods to more than 85 percent of the population and more than 87 percent of the economically-active labour force is engaged in agriculture. (Central Statistics Authority, 1997) Moreover, agriculture is the single most important source of food for the nation.

The rate of agricultural growth in Ethiopia depends on the speed with which the current subsistence-oriented production system is transformed into knowledge based and market-oriented production systems. Among the many institutional support services that need to catalyze the transformation process, the agricultural extension service plays a major role, since it contributes to the development of the skill and knowledge of farmers to adopt new and improved technologies and the approaches and processes with which the skill development and access to information are realized. (Berhanu et.al: 2006)

In agricultural extension delivery systems, effective training is expected to change the knowledge, attitude and practices (KAPs) of a trainee. According to Marsden (1998; as cited in Adesati et.al. 2006) the aim of training is three fold (1) to provide workers with the appropriate tools, which include both conceptual and technical issues to carry out their work more effectively (2) to make them aware of recent comparative developments within their field of interest (3) and to open up alternative ways of

thinking and implementing social development programmes.

“The agricultural extension service at the Farmers Training Centre's (FTCs) was expected to play an active role in linking farmers with other institutional support services such as input supply, credit, co-operative promotion, and agricultural produce marketing”.

To bring realistic transformations in agricultural extension services, farmers must be trained to improve their knowledge, skill and attitude towards deciding on their own affairs, access to information, exposure to improved farming and living practices. (Berhanu et.al. 2006)

Agricultural training is key elements in the process of agricultural transformation and realization of rising levels of rural community livelihoods. The training programs should be integrated in to overall development policies.

The present study examines (1) evaluate the impact of training on farmer's productivity in Dire Teyara and Sofi woredas - Harari region in Ethiopia and (2) assess the opportunities and constraints of Farmer Training Centre's in helping farmer's to improve productivity.

II. METHODOLOGY

The present paper is based both on primary and secondary source of data. 120 respondents were selected using proportional random sampling method of both trainees and un-trained farmers. Primary data were collected from sampled respondents and key informants on different aspects using semi-structured interview and checklists. Qualitative information was also gathered through observation, group discussions and key informant interviews. Secondary data were also collected from reports, documents, books, magazines and various media. Quantitative data was collected through personal interview using structured questionnaire. Pre-test procedure has been carried out to collect primary data for essential amendments. Based on the objectives of the study, descriptive statistical analyses were made using frequencies, standard deviation, mean, percentages and ranks to summarize and categorize the data.

The study has analyzed the impact of training and also the opportunities and constraints of Farmers Training Centre's. Both trained and untrained farmers were used as a sample groups.

Personal and demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by sex, age and marital status and educational background

Respondents		Trained (60)		Untrained (60)		Total (120)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Sex	Male	52	86.67	52	86.67	104	86.67
	Female	8	13.33	8	13.33	16	13.33
	Total	60	100	60	100	120	100
Age	20-30	25	41.67	22	36.67	47	39.17
	31-40	20	33.33	18	30	38	31.67
	41-60	15	25	18	30	33	27.5
	> than 60	0	0	2	3.33	2	16.66
	Total	60	100	60	100	120	100
Marital status	Married	41	68.33	38	63.33	79	65.83
	Single	13	21.67	10	16.67	23	19.17
	Widow	2	3.33	5	8.33	7	5.83
	Divorce	4	6.67	7	11.67	14	11.66
	Total	60	100	60	100	120	100

Source: Own survey, F= Frequency

Table 1 shows that, regarding the sex of respondents, 52(86.67%) and 8(13.33) were males and females respectively. Nearly 97.89% of the total interviewed households have ages between 20 to 60.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by educational level

Educational background	Trained (60)		Untrained (60)		Total (120)	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Primary	20	33.33	10	16.67	30	25
Secondary	10	16.67	5	8.33	15	12.5
Basic education	13	21.67	18	30	31	25.83
Illiterate	17	28.33	27	45	44	36.67
Total	60	100	60	100	120	100

Source: Own survey

Concerning the educational background of respondents Table-2 depicts that from the overall respondents, 44 of them (36.67) were under the category of Illiterate, 31 of them (25.83%) were under the category of basic education those who read and write, 30 of them (25%) under the category of primary education (grade 1 to 6) and fifteen of them (12.5%) were under the category of secondary school (7 to 12). This figure illustrates that the majority of the respondents were illiterate and thus this situation has a negative impact on functioning of Farmer Training Centre's.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by family size

Family Size	Trained (60)		Untrained (60)		Total (120)	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1-3	8	13.33	7	11.67	15	12.5
3-6	18	30	21	35	29	24.16
6-8	23	38.33	26	43.33	49	41.67
>8	11	18.33	6	10	17	14.17
Total	60	100	60	100	120	100

Source: Own survey

The data of table 3 shows that from the overall respondents, 49 of them (41.67%) have big family size composed of 6 to 8 family members.

4. Trained farmers response on trainee's selection

Table 4 shows the responses of sample respondents on the selection processes of trainees by the training centers.

Table 4: Responses on selection processes of trained farmers

Selection of trainees	Trained farmers (60)	
	Frequency	Percent
By Das	54	90
By PA leaders	4	6.67
By woreda cabinets	2	3.33

Source: Own survey

Table 4 reveals the different bodies involved in the trainees selection. About 90%, 6.67% and 3.33% of the trainees were selected by development agents, Peasant Association leaders and woreda (District) cabinets respectively.

5. Content of the training

Training content should connect with training need assessment of the farmers.

Table 5: Trained farmer's response on the content of the training

Content of the training	Trained farmers	
	Frequency	Percent
Relevant	49	81.67
Not-relevant	11	18.33
Total	60	100

Source: Own survey

Table 5 reveals that 81.67% of the respondents believed that the training content was relevant in terms of contents where as 18.33% respondents explained that the training content was not relevant.

6. Training need assessment (tna)

Trainer's active participation is needed for efficient training activities. Training need assessment is a pre-requisite for successful and outcome-oriented training programmes.

Table 6: The response of trained farmer's of tna

Item	Response	Frequency	Percent
Before training	Consulted	49	90.8
	Not consulted	11	9.2

Source: Own result

Table 6, we can see that most of the trained farmers (90.8%) were not consulted for their training needs before training. Training needs assessment is one of the crucial steps towards identifying the area of farmer's interest, and designing and developing curricula that suit the existing real conditions of farmers. Stakeholders in the study areas should consider the importance of TNA for effectiveness of farmers training.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents by distance of residence from farmer training centers

Distance in K.m	Trained		Untrained		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Less than 1	19	31.67	21	35	40	33.33
From 1 to 2	23	38.33	12	20	35	29.17
More than 3	18	30	27	45	45	37.5
Total	60	100	60	100	120	100

Source: Own survey

Table 7 reveals that the distance of respondents' residence from Farmer Training Centre's of the majority of them (37.5%) were more than 3 km, 40 of them (33.33%) were less than one km and 35 of them (29.17%) were 1 to 2 km. Development Agent-trained farmers and key informants expressed during the group discussion that the distance of the Farmer Training Centre's from residence areas was one of the major constraints for the effectiveness of training.

8. Delivery of training

Duration, timing, techniques and styles of training play a crucial role for the effectiveness of training.

Table 8 : Training delivery dimensions

Items	Trained farmers (n=60)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Preferred style of training		
With interval	33	55
Continuous	27	45
Length of training		
Sufficient	54	90
Not sufficient	6	10
Main training methods		
Class lecture	42	70
Group discussion	1	1.7
Demonstration	3	5
Field visit	1	1.7
Mixed type	14	23.33
Main types of training		
More theoretical	52	86.7
More practical	6	10
Balanced	2	3.33

Source: Own survey

The gathered data reveals that the time allowed to take courses was sufficient at 90% of sample respondent's responses and was not sufficient according to 10% of respondents. In rural areas 45% of respondents preferred

continuous style of training, while 55% of respondents favoured the interval style of training. Because farming practice needs continuous follow up, interval style was preferred more among the respondents. For the opinion of the main training methods, 70% of them replied that the training methodology was mainly class lecture. About 87% of trainees responded that trainings were conducted more on a theoretical basis, whereas practical and balanced techniques were only 10% and 3.3%, respectively. In the discussions conducted with key informants, the researcher investigated the limitations of training delivery systems. Among the observed challenges were more class lectures, low level of participation and lack of lesson plan preparation. Dire Teyara Farmers Training Centre's used a demonstration field with improved seed varieties of maize, sorghum, wheat, onion, pepper, carrot and other crops, as well as usage of fertilizer. This good experience has been visited by different bodies including government officials and farmers as a model.

Table - 9: Trained farmer's assessment on physical environment and Trainer's ability

Training activities	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Training environment and teaching aids at Farmer Training Centre's	15.3%	41.7%	31.9%	11.1%
Suitability of training venue	67.2%	21.1%	5.3%	6.4%
Quality of training facilities	17.8%	20.2%	33%	29%
Trainers abilities	23.9%	31.1%	29.3%	15.7%
Practical skills of Development Agent	27.4%	43.2%	12.3%	17.1%
Communication skills of Development Agent	36.6%	41.2%	13%	9.2%
Follow up and evaluation	2%	2.3%	27.1%	68.6%

Source: Own survey

Table-9 shows that 41.7% of the respondents believed training environment and teaching aids at FTC were good and 29% of them respondents' qualities of training facilities were poor. Whereas, 68.8% believed follow-up and evaluation were not conducted by Development agent.

Knowledge test of sample households

Knowledge of trained and untrained farmers was measured using a "Teacher-made test". The test items included 14 questions related to maize, sorghum and wheat packages. The scoring pattern was 1 score for a correct answer and 0 score for a wrong answer. The respondents were asked the questions and the answers were recorded. Then these answers were evaluated and their total knowledge scores were calculated. Since the score range was 0-14 the respondents were categorized into three: low (0-4), medium (5-9), and high (10-14) for further analytical purposes using descriptive statistics and the total score was used for correlation and regression analysis.

Table -10: Knowledge test of sample households

Respondents	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Trained	60	11.41	4.13	3.67**
Untrained	60	5.03	2.57	

Source: Own survey, significant at $P \leq 0.01$ levels of significance

Table-10, t-test clearly illustrated that there was a highly significant ($P \leq 0.01$) difference between the mean score of knowledge of trained and untrained farmers who obtained training in maize, sorghum and wheat extension packages. From the above table, the knowledge test indicated that the trained farmers had better knowledge than untrained farmers had on maize, sorghum and wheat extension packages. In fact, untrained farmers also knew something about those packages from their life experience and interaction with trained farmers, but trained farmers were more informed and updated by training. The result of knowledge test indicates that majority of trained farmers are under high knowledge and few of them were medium knowledge categories. Whereas most of the untrained respondents were under the low and small number of them were under medium under knowledge categories.

For example, before training most of the farmers were not aware of accurate application of fertilizers, campsite preparation and usage of natural resource conservation and water harvesting, etc., but now most of them are able to apply such practices.

Practice difference of sample households

Practice was a dependent variable for the final analysis, but it was incorporated to generate some useful information. The practice of farmers was measured based on the recommended package. Practices of farmers were evaluated based on their responses on maize, sorghum and wheat packages. To test the practice of trained and untrained farmers, seven questions related to maize, sorghum and wheat packages were used and the questions had seven answers. The scoring pattern was 1 score for a correct answer and 0 score for a wrong answer. The respondents were asked the questions and the answers were recorded. Then these answers were evaluated and their total practice scores were calculated. Since the score range was 0-7 the respondents were categorized into three: Low (0-2), medium (3-5) and high (6-7) for further analytical purposes.

Table 11: Practice difference of sample households

Respondents	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Trained	60	4.35	1.43	1.969**	0.03
Untrained	60	3.71	1.23		

Source: Own survey

**significant at 3% probability level

The practice comparison of trained and untrained farmers reveals that the mean score of practices of trained respondents was higher than that of untrained farmers. The results presented showed that training improved the levels of application of the scientific know-how in maize, sorghum and wheat production.

Attitude difference of sample households

The attitude of 120 trained and untrained respondent farmers was measured by Likert scale using statements regarding their feelings toward crop extension packages. The scale allowed negative or positive attitude towards maize, sorghum and wheat packages in two PAs. The mean scores of trained and untrained farmers' attitude were analyzed using an independent sample t-test.

Table-12: Attitude difference of sample households

Respondents	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Trained	60	24.21	2.526	3.733***	
Untrained	60	19.03	2.187		

Source: Own survey

*** Significant at <1% of probability level

The mean score of the attitude of trained farmers was significantly higher than the untrained response. This indicates that trained farmers at Farmers Training Centres have more opportunity to enhance decision-making by enabling the capacity to analyze information than untrained farmers.

Overall impact assessment

Training provided by the two Farmers Training Centers (Dere Teyara and Gelmeshira) has shown to improve the knowledge, attitude and practice of the trained respondents when compared to that of untrained respondents in the study areas. For instance, before training commenced most of the farmers were not aware of compost preparation and cultivation of commercial horticultural crops. The impact of training can inspire farmers toward a better living and enhance production and productivity, higher income and improvement in their standard of living. During the past year about 7 major areas of crop training have been conducted at Farmers Training Centres. Most of the trainee farmers were trained on the use of improved seed varieties, application of fertilizer, preparation and usage of manure and compost, water harvesting, land preparation for horticulture, timely weeding and pest protection. Regarding the livestock training carried out at Farmers Training Centres, a number of farmers were trained on dairy and fattening, poultry management, improved feeding and advanced-housing conditions. In relation to natural resource management trained farmers were able to practice soil and water conservation. Trained farmers also benefited in relation to personal communication, teamwork, enhancement in the quality and quantity of production and productivity, adoption of agricultural technologies, use of credit and also family planning.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study has clearly indicated that training in Farmers Training Centre's has a positive impact on farmer's productivity and effective in changing the level of knowledge, attitude and practices of farmers on different extension packages and technologies. Based on the results of this study finding the following recommendations have been forwarded in order to improve the impact of Farmers Training Centre's.

- With full participation of farming communities at the grass root level, integrated and efficient intervention of development programs should be designed and implemented.

- Practical field demonstration, video/audios and visiting of best model farmers should be practiced instead of theoretical and class room lecture of training.

- Training need assessments of farmers should be implemented based on farmer's priority interests.

- Appropriate budget should be allocated for further performance of Farmers Training Centre's training.

- Farmers Training Centre's committee should be established at regional, Woreda (District) and Peasants Association level to strengthen and support daily activities of Farmer Training Centre's.

- Regional and woreda (District) officials should try their best to link missed actors with Farmer Training Centre's and boost and strengthen medium and weak actors to collaborate with Farmers Training Centre's.

- Strong, planned and regular monitoring and evaluation system should take a priority part to be undertaken by regional, woreda (District) and Development Agents.

- In order to solve the drop out of trainees from training, woreda (District) and Peasants Association cabinets should investigate the root causes and put appropriate solutions and also design some incentive mechanisms to motivate and encourage farmers.

- Alternative training programs should be designed to increase the low level of female participation in training.

- Suitable livestock housing buildings and farming equipment should be provided by woreda (District) officials.

- Demonstration fields should be managed as economically efficient revenue-generating activities of the Farmers Training Centres and as effective teaching demonstration centers.

Development Agents and woreda (District) extension experts should be trained in specific ICT and extension training skills. In order to give market-oriented demonstrations at Farmers Training Centres, in-service training should be given to Development Agents on technical skills, entrepreneurial, agribusiness, marketing, credit etc.,

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