

SAMETI: Managing agriculture better

Background:

It is now widely accepted that for well-being of the residents of the state, a sound policy on agriculture development is essential. The economy of the State will depend on sustained and healthy growth of agriculture.

After Independence, Administrative Training Institutes were established at the State level to provide managerial as well as administrative training for the State department personnel. However, there has been little thinking over the years about the need to provide in-service training for agriculture and allied sector officers. The State government through the Department of Agriculture with technical backup from the agriculture university provides training to its officers and staff members. But there is hardly any provision for training on management aspects, resulting in poor utilization of resources.

Under the World Bank-aided National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP), Innovation in Technology Dissemination (ITD) component provides for establishing a State-level institution i.e. State Agricultural Management & Extension Training Institute (SAMETI) to provide extension and management inputs for field-level functionaries. SAMETI is an autonomous body with greater flexibility in structure and functioning and is responsible for organising need-based training programmes for agriculture and allied sectors, and exposure visits for members of the farming community. This institution is linked to other technical and management institutes at the state level to provide the desired

training inputs. SAMETI functions under the technical guidance of MANAGE, Hyderabad.

The General Council is the policy-making body of SAMETI, which is headed by the Agriculture Minister of the State. Agriculture Production Commissioner (APC), Director (SAMETI), State Nodal Officer (NATP), Director (Agriculture) and Additional Secretary (Agriculture), Vice-Chancellor, SAU, Principal, Extension Training Institute, Director (Horticulture), Director (Soil Conservation), Head (ICAR) institute of the State and Project Director, ATMA are members of the council. The Executive Council, which is responsible for the execution of programmes of SAMETI, functions under the chairmanship of APC of the state. For smooth running and coordination between all line departments at the state level, there is a state level committee — Interdepartmental Working Group (IDWG) headed by the APC.

Intervention and process:

After the intervention of MANAGE, Hyderabad in January 2003, SAMETI came into existence in Jharkhand under the able guidance of Commissioner & Secretary (Agriculture), Jharkhand and Director of Agriculture as the State Nodal Officer.

Under the dynamic leadership of Dr AK Sarkar as Director, SAMETI has been playing a pivotal role for the all-round growth of the agriculture sector in the State. It is important that to meet the requirements of capacity building, a large number of training activities are needed in the area of managerial, technical as well as human resource management and information technology in agriculture and allied sectors. Within a very short period, SAMETI has formulated and conducted 15 such training programmes/workshops/exposure visits that are as follows.

Sl.	Title of course/programme	Dates	Participants
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1.	Training Programme on <i>“Principles & Practices of Management”</i>	22-26 April’03	PDs, DPDs, KVK/ZRS Scientists, Line dept, SAMETI, faculty
2.	Banner Programme on <i>“New Dimension of Agriculture Extension Management”</i>	12-16 May’03	PDs, DPDs, KVK/ ZRS Scientists, Line dept, SAMETI
3.	Orientation Workshop on “NATP”	26-30 May’03	BTT, FAC, Line Dept.
4.	Training Programme on <i>“Basic Skills on Information Technology”</i>	23-27 June’03	PDs, DPDs, Line Dept, BTT
5.	Training Programme on <i>“Promotion of Farmers Group & Farmers Organization”</i>	4-8 Aug’03	DPDs, FAC, BTT, FIG group leaders.
6.	<i>“Operational skills in computer”</i> for DAO of non-ATMA districts of Jharkhand	25-27 & 28- 30 Aug’03	District Agriculture Officers.
7.	Course on <i>“Leadership Development”</i>	1-4 Sept’03	DPDs, KVK/ ZRS Scientists, Line dept, SAMETI
8.	<i>“Basic Skills in Information Technology”</i>	16-18 Aug’03	Line Dept, BTT, ZRS Scientist
9.	<i>“Operation Skills in Computer”</i> for Dist Soil Conservation Officers of Jharkhand	Nov.10-12	DSCOs of Jharkhand
10 .	Workshop on <i>“Web Designing & Hosting with Multimedia Application”</i> for ATMA	Nov 3-5, 03	IT Facilitator and Other computer

	districts, SAMETI and Agriculture Dept. in Jharkhand		persons from ATMA
11	Exposure Visit on “ <i>Medicinal & Aromatic Plants</i> ” of 5 farmer leaders each of 4 ATMA districts to RR &TTS, Semiliguda, Koraput & ATMA, Koraput	Nov 15-17, 03	FIG Leaders from ATMA districts
12	“ <i>Principles & Practices of Management</i> ” for Facilitation skill development.	Dec 14-19’ 03	ZRS/KVK Scientists, NGOs, PDs, DPDs, SAMETI Faculty, BTT, FACs
13	Regional Review Workshop on “ <i>ITD Component of NATP</i> ”	Jan 28-30’ 2004	PDs., DPDs, Directors (SAMETI), State Nodal Officers (SHQ) of Bihar & Jharkhand
14	Training On “Operational Skills in Computer”	Feb 14-17’ 04	Line Depts, BTT, ATMA officials of Palamu
15	Workshop on “ <i>Documentation of Success Stories</i> ” on ITD Component of NATP, Jharkhand	March 23-27’ 04	PDs/ DPDs/ Faculty members of SAMETI
Total Participants Trained: 329		Total Resource Person used: 48	

Altogether, 329 persons participated in the above courses conducted for 64 days with 49 resource persons. SAMETI has brought about multi-faceted changes in the training module. Traditional training methods like lectures have been replaced with group discussion and participatory learning. With the introduction of modern

information and communication technologies, training methodology too has been given a facelift.

SAMETI has established systematic and close linkages with regional, national and international institutions to achieve the desired success. It has identified need-based modern management tools and techniques with a problem-solving approach, utilising personnel management, resource management, input management and conflict management at the organisation level. The institute has developed the skills of the State extension machinery and has helped identify the priorities and adoption of a problem-solving approach. SAMETI conducts programme-oriented research in the area of agricultural extension management as a sequel to provide feedback from training programmes.

It has developed close linkage with KVKs, ZRS, State Agriculture University, NGOs, management institutes, MANAGE, XISS, RK Mission, SRI, HARP, ILRI, Institute of Sericulture and uses appropriate faculty resource for providing training and consultancy services to ATMA and non-ATMA district functionaries in the state.

SAMETI has documented its efforts through publication of leaflets, booklets and postures for effective and sustainable transfer of frontier agriculture technologies for the benefit of the farming community. One such innovation in technology dissemination was the publication of an Annual Calendar' 2004 providing information on time and methods of major agriculture operations for crops. SAMETI has created awareness among agriculture and allied department officials on working with a group approach at the state level with coordination by inter departmental working group (IDWG) so that a collective effort is made for target achievement. For effective and timely transfer of technologies, SAMETI has provided technical support to develop a Strategic Research and Extension based Plan (SREP) for ATMA districts.

Benefits and impact:

The institute has conducted 15 training/workshop/exposure visit programmes within a year for PDs, DPDs of ATMA, KVK/ ZRS scientists, line department officials, BTT members, NGOs and farmers' groups and farmers' organisation. This has ushered in attitudinal changes, working pattern and helped develop linkages. Field functionaries are now encouraged to work in groups effectively in a team and cooperate with each other at their respective workplaces. This is helping to perform jobs through process planning and time management. Through the six training programmes on basic skills on Information and Communication Technology, participants are now able to operate computers to meet their work needs. For creating new ideas, SAMETI has organised brainstorming sessions with participation of scientists, farmer leaders, block/district level officers of various departments. Chairman, SAMETI-cum-Commissioner & Secretary (Agriculture) and the State Nodal Officer-cum-Director, Agriculture, are regularly monitoring the functioning of SAMETI and have wholeheartedly welcomed the initiatives undertaken by SAMETI. SAMETI is now planning to provide managerial and technical training to 300 district and block level officers of the state on various issues related to agriculture extension management with close collaboration with the state agriculture department.