

Workshop for the project ‘Impact Evaluation of Pilot Project ‘Development of Model Villages under Soil Health Card Scheme’ held on 21st December, 2021

The growth rate in the agricultural sector has always lagged behind that of other sectors, thus pulling down the overall growth rate of the economy. Boosting the agricultural sector and increasing the incomes of farmers, has been a major policy issue for the government. One way of achieving this objective is through soil testing, which will help to reveal nutrient deficiencies and improve nutrient application. This in turn will increase the capacity of the soil to enhance crop yield. Hence, a Soil Health Card Scheme was launched in 2015, to provide soil health card to farmers periodically. To strengthen this scheme, the government further launched a pilot project on ‘Development of Model Villages under Soil Health Card Scheme’ in 2019-20. Under this scheme, one village- i.e. a model village- per block was selected for testing the soil of each and every landholding in the village. As per the guidelines, after soil testing and distribution of soil health cards to the farmers, training programmes and demonstrations were to be organized for creating awareness about deficiencies in the soil and for promoting judicious uses of fertilisers, micro nutrients, bio fertilisers and manure. In order to evaluate the impact of this programme on awareness of the farmers about the scheme and about application of the recommended doses of fertilisers, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare, Government of India, has allotted the study “Impact Evaluation of Pilot Project - Development of Model Villages under Soil Health Card Scheme” to the Agro Economic Research Centres, located in various states. AERC Pune, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, is conducting this study for the state of Maharashtra. The study is based on secondary and primary data. A detailed questionnaire was prepared to be addressed to farmers, in order to study the impact of the scheme at the grass root level. A workshop was therefore conducted, in order to train 15 field investigators on the method of data collection and thorough understanding of the questionnaire. Prof Jayanti Kajale, project coordinator, explained in great detail, to the field investigators, on the method of data collection, the clarity with which the questions should be addressed to farmers and the importance of the project. Dr. Sangeeta Shroff, In charge of AERC Pune, was also present and addressed the participants on the contribution of AERCs to policies framed for the agricultural sector.



