Emerging Agricultural Extension Models

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Agricultural Extension is an instrument of change. It enables farmers to seek and adopt desirable changes in farming. Its focus is on technology improvements, leading to human resource development. Agriculture normally keeps changing, either slowly or rapidly. The role of agricultural extension is to make this process more purposeful. And, as the agricultural sector changes, the tasks of the agricultural extension will also change, while its basic functions remain essentially the same.

A Basic Model of Extension Education

Extension is a change inducing system, which enables farmers to improve their living mainly through their own efforts. By upgrading the knowledge and skills of farmers in their occupations, Extension helps them to increase their productivity, production and their incomes.

Extension education is a system of working with farmers, their families and communities, using informal educational procedures, to relate useful, practical new knowledge to their needs and interests, thereby enabling them to make satisfactory improvements in their living (Dwarakinath, 2011).

Farmers are interested in meeting their needs and problems in order to create more satisfying situations. The extension agency helps them in this effort. Extension systems works with local farming communities to promote improvements in farm production, family life and community living. It has access to new knowledge useful to farmers. This body of new knowledge is the starting point of all extension efforts.

Components of the Model

The basic model of Extension system consists of five components. They include: (1) a body of new and useful knowledge, (2) farming communities who need the knowledge, (3) an extension agency to link the two, (4) a set of extension educational methods and (5) infrastructure and support services.

How does extension system operate?

The main task of extension is to make available to farmers new perceptions, practices and products for which they have a need.

- It works as a system of informal education helping people to improve their living. It remains
educational in its objectives, principles and methods.

- It develops informal working relationships with individuals and groups, studies their needs and problems, develops problem solving approaches in partnership with them and gets them implemented.
- It maintains links with research agency in order to ensure continuous flow of useful information and to feed back field problems for research.
- It fosters growth of the required infrastructure facilities to support development including supplies, services and marketing.
- It encourages farmers to evaluate the changes they have made to derive lessons for future application and to derive a sense of accomplishment as a motivation for further effort.
- It encourages farmers to organize themselves into groups and associations to safe safeguard and advance their interests (Dwarakinath, 2011).

**Extension aims to:**

1. Change production systems and sustain the resource base
2. Increase and improve farmers’ productivity and income on sustainable basis
3. Attain food security and improve livelihoods of farmers.
4. Attain higher levels of efficiency in the farm enterprise
5. Improve well being of farmers

**Major trends shaping the delivering of extension services moving extension far beyond technology transfer**

1. Dwindling Government budgets for extension, leading to the privatization of public services.
2. Emergence of new service providers in the context of privatization
3. Increased differentiation among client groups and issue areas (private demand driven extension for commercial farmers’, public livelihoods focused extension for poor and subsistence farmers’, community management support for environmental and natural resource management challenges).
4. User demand for effective and appropriate extension related to higher expectations of rural communities and farm families and their growing capacity to voice demands.
5. Globalization and liberalization of agricultural

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**Purpose of any emerging Extension model**

- Improving the quality of life of a farmer
  - Increase his net income
    - Diversity Farm Activities
    - Increase crop yields
    - Improved Agricultural Marketing
    - Create jobs
      - Improve soil fertilization
      - Organize local co-operative
      - Provide training
      - Promote local industry
markets.
6. Increased presence of agriculture business and commercial farming.
7. Environmental imperatives
8. Climate changes.
9. Increased use of biotechnologies.
10. Access to new ICTs – increased telephone, cell phone and internet access in rural areas.

High expectations of people for extension
1. Efficient, demand driven extension services based on partnerships between Government and Private Sectors.
2. Farmers participating in extension programme formulations, implementation, monitoring and evaluation ensuring their needs are met.
3. Private sector including NGOs and CBOs participating in extension service delivery in response to farmers’ demands.

Emerging Extension Models
Extension Education Planners throughout the world face the different challenges of being creative in their programming development efforts and responsive to the needs of rural communities and farmers. In today’s world, people are continuously involved in change process either as passive elements or as active citizens, more often as mere project recipients or targets.

Participatory Model : Non-Government Paradigms in agricultural extension
The predominant linear view of technology transfer is insufficient for addressing complex agricultural problems that exist, especially in a limited resource country like India.

The time tested models like T&V system of Extension and others are mostly top-down approaches and they are one-way paradigms. The inadequate linkages between research and extension establishments are a major weakness of development. Public sector extension systems have had limited success working with resource-poor farmers.

The NGOs (CSOs) play an increasing important role in agricultural extension in developing countries. The ability of public extension institutions is especially limited due to inadequate human resource and facilities.

Due to their good linkages with resource – poor farmers and grassroots organizations the NGOs have considerable advantage. They offer some refreshing alternative programmatic approaches compared to dominant agricultural technology transfer / extension paradigm.

Participatory Features : Facilitation and networks
- The approach of NGOs is different from traditional extension models. They adopt participatory approach, progressive development and execution and operating through grassroots network.
- The participatory approach is significantly different from the predominant technology transfer paradigm. The farmer is not viewed as the “end recipient” as in the case of top-down technology delivery models. Likewise extension worker is not just viewed as a “conduit” (channel) for conveying information to farmers.
- Rather than formulating a pre-packaged prescription for farmers, more effective NGOs regard farmers are valued partners in the development process at all levels of intervention need assessment, programme development, participatory technology development, implementation and evaluation. The partnership model entails giving

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decision making to farmers.

- For NGOs, projects are not the objective, they are only means. People have to discuss and arrive at their own solutions.
- More scope for articulation and participation of farmers. Engaging a local volunteer as promoter (may be called SAP - Sustainable Agriculture Promoter as in the case of AMEF in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu). The SAP should have willingness to serve people, how he interacts with other people and his respect for others.
- Linking NGOs to the Government departments and Universities.
- An innovative model of agricultural extension (agricultural department) is steadily evolving and maturing among NGOs. It has two importance characteristics – participatory at the grassroots level and proactive at the institutional level.
- The NGO development model is clearly different from the dominant agricultural extension of technology transfer model.

The Need for Greater Collaboration

The area of NGO-Government relationship is decisive for the strategic development and impact of NGOs. To achieve wider relevance and to gain replicability for their initiatives on large scale, the NGOs must influence government bodies both at local, state and national levels. It is through collaboration rather than competition, that both public sector and NGOs can work towards more responsive development models. As proactive brokers of agricultural technologies, NGOs enhance change agent integrity and help build trust with farmers, thus establishing the livelihood of more interactive extension opportunities.

- The government departments stand to benefit tremendously by allowing private and voluntary efforts to take root in the society there by provide effective entry point for public sector programmes.
- When a project is given to a NGO with funds, they can begin to work immediately. The government can work with then collaboratively sharing their experience.
- As intermediaries, NGOs serve as forceful advocates of change at grassroots level. They often bridge the gap between public sector extension and resource – poor farmers.

Partnership – Extension Model

It is a measure for improving links with stakeholders. The process of agricultural information dissemination involves key actors and roles. It involves both public and private extension personnel. The actors are Government Department, private sector and NGOs, research organizations, university extension departments and farmers.

This was tried in Nigeria to facilitate adoption of banana technologies among farmers. The partnership could be sustained by identifying and selecting committed partners. The use of many organizations would promote higher adoption of new technologies among farmers.

Felicitation model of extension

This has emerged in recent years. It emphasizes on farmer networking to reinforce individual learning, centered with a process which is facilitated by highly trained outside agricultural professionals (both researchers and extension workers), thus comprising Agricultural Knowledge and Intensive System (AKIS)

REFERENCES


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