

Constraints Perceived by Farmers and Multi Purpose Extension Officers in Delivering Extension Services

O Sarada

Key Words: *Constraints, Farmers, MPEOs, Profile, suggestions,*

experience. As majority of the farmers were in middle and old age group they had more farming experience. Fifty per cent of the farmers had less than one hectare land holding followed by thirty eight per cent with 1-2 ha. and only seventeen per cent (16.67%) with more than 3 ha land holding. This result clearly indicated that majority of the farmers were small and marginal in the study area. Almost sixty per cent (56.67%) of the farmers had medium extension participation followed by high (23.33%) and low (20.00%) categories. Similar results were reported by Omer *et al* (2012)

Great majority of the farmers felt lack of timely information and services (92.22%), inadequate knowledge of field extension functionaries (84.44%), irregular contacts with farmers (81.11%), local non availability of field extension functionaries (76.67%), poor communication skills (73.33%), extension functionaries always engaged with documentation works rather than dissemination works (65.56%) and insufficient number of field extension functionaries (62.22%). Below fifty per cent of the farmers expressed lack of confidence on extension functionaries (48.89%) and field extension functionaries were not from agriculture background (45.56%) were their constraints. Procedural delays and improper programme planning were the major reasons contributed for failure to provide timely information and services to the farmers. As majority of the field extension staff (MPEOs) were with diploma qualification and recently joined they were lacking practical field knowledge. Field extension staff were majorly involved in 'e' crop booking and other documentation works consequently leading to irregular contacts with farmers. Some of the field extension officers were from other than agriculture background which in turn affecting the farmers' confidence on them. Apantaku *et al*(2016) reported similar constraints like inadequate extension equipment, inadequate extension staff and improper planning of extension programmes.

Great majority of the farmers suggested that training extension functionaries on local needs of the farmers (91.11), local availability of field extension functionaries (85.56%), field extension functionaries with agriculture background (67.78%), involvement of field extension functionaries in organizing demonstrations and trainings to farmers (65.56%) and providing transport and communication facilities (53.33%) will enhance the efficacy of extension delivery. Updating the knowledge levels of field extension functionaries on a regular basis, within reach to the farmers and facilitating facilities like transport and mobiles will help the field extension functionaries to gain the confidence of the farmers on departmental activities.

Majority (68.89%) of the MPEOs were in 20-30 yrs age group followed by thirty per cent in 31-40 yrs and only two per cent in 41-50 years age group. Majority of them had diploma in agriculture (65.56%), followed by B.Sc. (17.78%), Ag.B.Sc. (13.33%) and M.Sc.(3.33%) qualification. More than half (54.44%) of the MPEOs had below two years of experience followed by forty per cent with 2-3 years and 5.56 per cent with more than 3 years of experience. The major reason behind this result was majority of the MPEOs joined with diploma in agriculture and they have been recruited on large scale during the year 2015-16. More than fifty per cent (52.28%) of the MPEOs were female and remaining 47.78% were male. Regarding the marital status almost sixty per cent of them were single and others (43.34%) were married. This might be because majority of them belonged to the age group of 20-30 years.

From table 5 it is evident that majority of the MPEOs felt that, insufficient aids and facilities to disseminate information (86.67%), large area to be covered (83.33%), overloaded with schemes (81.11%), lack of field experience (78.89%), poor transportation facilities to villages (76.67%), most of the time they were engaged with documentation works (75.56%), lack of need based trainings (73.33%), political instability in villages (56.67%), lack of timely communication in department (55.56%), poor planning of extension programmes (54.44%), insufficient staff (47.78%) and insufficient funds from government (32.22%) were the major constraints in extension delivery. Huge targets, insufficient facilities and improper programme planning were hindering field extension functionaries to deliver their services effectively. The results were in conformity with that of Navab singh *et al* (2016).

Suggestions given by field extension functionaries were presented in table 6. Majority of the MPEOs expressed that regular training to extension functionaries (81.11%), providing facilities to implement extension programmes effectively (73.33%), proper planning of extension programmes (60.00%), need based extension services (56.67%) and sufficient number of field extension functionaries (45.56%) will facilitate effective extension delivery. Regular trainings to them may help them to solve the regular field problems with the enhanced knowledge and skills. Facilities like transportation will help MPEOs to reach unreached and fulfill their needs. Sufficient manpower is the first and foremost requirement for the success of any programme.

CONCLUSION

It could be concluded from the results that both farmers and field extension functionaries expressed constraints like lack of regular trainings, lack of facilities,

insufficient staff, irregular contacts with farmers and improper planning of extension programmes which need to be rectified with regular trainings with sufficient infrastructure and manpower with meticulous planning. More extension personnel should be employed and fortified with necessary equipment and facilities to enhance effective dissemination of information for transformation of agriculture, proper planning of extension programmes should be made before its being carried out and provision of equipment for dissemination of information should be done by the government to enhance effective dissemination of information to the rural farmers. Extension personnel should be well motivated to enhance them to work more efficiently. The constraints identified can be reduced by a re-structured, re-examined and strengthened extension service system after intervening of government by developing suitable policies and reforms. Effective policies and reforms are going to be the greatest challenge for the Public Extension System. In order to improve the quality of extension service, needs assessment should be conducted and involvement of farmers in programme development should be encouraged.

LITERATURE CITED

- Agbamu J U, 2007** Essentials of Agricultural Communication in Nigeria. Malthouse Press Limited Lagos, 91-93.
- Apantaku S O, Aromolaran A K, Shobowale A A and Sijuwola K O, 2016** Farmers and Extension Personnel View of Constraints to Effective Agricultural Extension Services Delivery in Oyo State, Nigeria, *Journal of Agricultural Extension* 20 (1),202-214
- Apantaku S O and Oyegunle J O, 2016.** Reports from the Field: Challenges of Agricultural Extension Agents in Ogun State Nigeria. Paper Presented at the 7th GFRAS. (Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services) Annual Meeting. 3-6 Oct. Fini Hotel, Limbe, Cameroon.
- Bello M and Salau E S, 2009** A case for Participatory (cost sharing) Approach to Agricultural Extension in Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural Extension* 13(1) 84-89
- Ijeoma, M C and Adesope O M, 2015** Effect of personality types of extension personnel on their job performance in Rivers State Agricultural Development Programme. *Journal of Agricultural Extension.* 19 (1), 1- 13
- Navab Singh F L, Sharma, Bacchu Singh Meena, Pankaj Seth V K Basunathe and Ganesh Dashm, 2016** Constraints perceived by officials of dairy union in southern Rajasthan *International Journal of Science, Environment and Technology*, 5(6), 3783 – 3787
- Omer, J.A.E., Abu Hassan, Abu Bakar, Hasnah Md. Jais and Faisal Moftah Shalloof, 2012** The impact of major constraints on agricultural extension in eastern Libya, *Journal of Agricultural Technology* 8(4): 1171-1183
- Yusuf D E, Omokore D F and Musa M W, 2011.** Socio-economic and Institutional Factors Influencing Farmers' Perception of Privatization of Agricultural Extension Services in Kaduna State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural Extension* 15(2),20-25

Senior Scientist (Extn), Farmers Call Centre, Lam,
Guntur.

O Sarada

Received on 01.03.2018 and Revised on 20.09.2018