The Andhra Agric. J 58(1):252-254, 2011

Factors Influencing Feedback Effectiveness of Farmers as Perceived by Extension Personnel

Key words : Extension personnel, Feedback effectiveness.

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Agricultural development is a complex, continuous and multidimensional phenomenon which involves the major actors i.e., researchers, extension and farmers who are continuously engaged in development, dissemination and adoption of modern technologies. In fact, all of them have a common goal of achieving productivity at the farm level and thereby contributing to national economy.

Extension communication is never complete without feedback information. Adequate and purposeful feedback is crucial for effective communication. Feedback information provides the communicator an opportunity to take corrective steps in communication work, helps in identifying subsequent activities and acts as a pathfinder for need based research. To re-orient farm research there is a need to analyze the factors effecting effectiveness of feedback of farmers as perceived by extensionists.

This study was undertaken in Krishna-Godavari zone of Andhra Pradesh as it covers seven districts with diverse situation and more number of extension workers. A sample of 50 extension (Assistant Director of Agriculture and Agricultural Officers) out of 246 from State Department of Agriculture who had regular contacts with researchers and farmers and visit research stations frequently were selected by using simple random sampling method. The independent characteristics were selected for the study purpose after reviewing the research studies of Lakshminarayana (1989), Sambireddy (1997) and Jagannadaraju (1997). To measure feedback effectiveness of farmers as perceived by extension, a structured schedule was developed for the study.

Feedback effectiveness of farmers as perceived by extension

Feedback effectiveness of farmers as perceived by extension is presented in Table 1. Thirty eight per cent of extension perceived that feedback effectiveness of farmers was low, 30 per cent perceived it as medium and 32 per cent perceived it as high. This trend is because farmers were evaluative in nature and this is leading to inaccurate and some times non-specific feedback. So the feedback received was not useful to extensionists.

Relationship of personal, psychological and communication characteristics of extension with their perceived feedback effectiveness of farmers

Path analysis with extension perceived feedback effectiveness as dependent variable and twelve independent variables selected was carried out and the results obtained are presented in Table 2. Results are presented in terms of direct effect, total indirect effect and the largest indirect effect of each of the independent variables through other variables on dependent variable. The coefficients shown in the figures are directly comparable.

The maximum direct effect was recorded by the variable communicative initiative (X_9) followed by extension-researcher interaction (X_{11}), role awareness (X_8), extension-farmer interaction (X_{12}), job commitment (X_7), empathy (X_6), training (X_4), experience (X_3), communicative responsiveness (X_{10}), education (X_2), client accountability (X_5) and age (X_1) in that order on extension perceived feedback effectiveness of farmers. The variables viz., training, empathy, job commitment, role awareness, communicative initiative and extension-researcher interaction had positive direct effect while age, education, experience, client accountability, communicative responsiveness and extension-farmer interaction had negative direct effect on dependent variable.

Regarding the total indirect effect the data indicated that extension-farmer interaction followed by client accountability, empathy, role awareness, job commitment, education, training, extension-researcher interaction, communicative initiative, communicative responsiveness, experience and age had highest total indirect effect on perceived feedback effectiveness in that order. Among the twelve variables education, training, client accountability, empathy, job commitment, role awareness, communicative initiative, communicative

Table 1. Distribution of extensionists according to their perceived feedback effectiveness of farmers

n = 50

Categorization of variable	Frequency	Percentage
Low	19	38.00
Medium	15	30.00
High	16	32.00
Total	50	100.00
Mean	19.04	
SD	3.55	

Table 2. Path coefficient analysis of personal, psychological and communication characteristics of extensionists with their perceived feedback effectiveness of farmers

Variable number	Independent variable	Direct effect	Rank	Total indirect effect	Rank	Largest indirect effect channelized through
	Personal characteristics					
1.	Age	-0.0988	XII	-0.083	XII	0.0381(X_{12})
2.	Education	-0.0411	X	0.3291	VI	0.1781 (X_9)
3.	Experience	-0.0131	VIII	-0.0522	XI	0.0304 (X_{11})
4.	Training	0.0117	VII	0.2942	VII	0.2452 (X_9)
	Psychological characteristics					
5.	Client accountability	-0.0672	XI	0.6439	II	0.4277 (X_9)
6.	Empathy	0.0490	VI	0.5349	III	0.4257 (X_9)
7.	Job commitment	0.0994	V	0.4726	V	0.3847 (X_9)
8.	Role awareness	0.1944	III	0.4817	IV	0.4697 (X_9)
	Communication characteristics					
9.	Communicative initiative	0.5871	I	0.1623	IX	0.1555 (X_8)
10.	Communicative responsiveness	-0.0194	IX	0.1623	X	0.4965 (X_9)
11.	Extensionist-researcher interaction	0.1996	II	0.2103	VIII	0.2010 (X_9)
12.	Extensionist-farmer interaction	-0.1475	IV	0.7091	I	0.4409 (X_9)

responsiveness, extension-researcher interaction and extensionist-farmer interaction had positive total indirect effect whereas age and experience had negative total indirect effect on extensionists perceived feedback effectiveness of farmers.

As communicative initiative is the first and foremost factor in provoking the responses from farmers, it need to be emphasized and given utmost importance by the State Department of Agriculture while planning communication related training programmes for extension personnel. So that they could get timely, reliable and useful feedback from farmers.

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Krishi Vigyan Kendra,
Undi- 534199,
Andhra Pradesh, India

O Sarada

(Received on 16.02.2010 and revised on 17.05.2010)