

Research Note :

EMPOWERMENT STYLE AND OUTLOOK OF EXTENSION PERSONNEL ABOUT FUNCTIONING OF KRISHI VIGYAN KENDRAS

Lakhan Singh¹ & Atar Singh²

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) is an innovative science based extension institution, which undertakes vocational trainings for farmers, farmwomen and rural youths, conducted on farm trials for technology assessment and refinement. Front Line Demonstrations are conducted on latest agricultural technologies at the farmers' fields. There is strong networking of KVKs in the country. It is well known fact that the extension personnel have to deal with farmers' problems at different field situations. They normally use popular problem solving approaches such as prescriptive, where extensionists always tried to find out technological solutions for the farmers and offer them too. Another approach is enabling in nature in which farmers are helped to become self-dependend with their own efforts (Singh and Sinha, 2002 and Singh, 1997). It is abundantly clear that extension work is difficult and complex phenomenon. Perhaps, extension personnel have doubt about abilities of the farmers. They hardly try to empower them rather they create a dependency syndrome among the farmers. The subordinates are often ignored in utilizing their services at each and important steps at the planning and programming. The success of any endeavour towards extension activities will depend on the extent on which the extension personnel empower the farmers for their active involvement in all development

activities. Such issues and views of extension personnel need re-thinking and action. Keeping these facts in view, the study was designed with specific objectives: to explore the level of empowerment of extension personnel and to know the views and opinion of extension staff regarding KVK functioning with their suggestions for further improvement.

METHODOLOGY :

The study was conducted at different KVKs located in Zone IV (ICAR), Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh) and Uttaranchal during 2002-03. Altogether forty respondents (extension personnel) of 20 KVKs under different agro-climatic conditions were randomly selected. Extension personnel represent those scientists, which are working in KVKs and actively engaged in extension work irrespective of their disciplines. The respondents belonged to different disciplines viz., agril extension (12), agronomy (12), animal husbandry (5), home science (3), horticulture (3), plant protection (3), and each one from agril engineering, fisheries and agril economics. The data were collected with the help of semi-structured interview schedule. All the respondents were individually contacted for collecting data. Appropriate statistical methods like percentage, mean, range, and standard deviation were used and computed.

Empowerment refers to one's own dominant thoughts and tendencies towards self-efficacy while at work, at the work place,

1&2. Sr. Scientists (Agril Extension & Agronomy), Zonal Coordination Unit, Zone Goordination Unit, Zone IV (ICAR), CSAUA&T Campus, Kanpur-208 002.

in the field or at home. Such thoughts or tendencies represent a continuum sense of efficacy with "self-sense of powerlessness". The extension staff were administered a scale to measure the psychological orientation of the extension functionaries towards empowering the farmers. There were three components in this scale, which are as follows:

1. *Autonomy* represents one's subjecthood which is reflected in one's actions, initiative, hope of success and problem solving, where as the *dependency* represents objecthood which is reflected in one's behaviour related to conformity, fear of failure, lack of self confidence and problem avoiding.
2. The *self-esteem* indicates the extent to which one is innovative and creative while *self-depreciation* is reflected in behaviour related to safe playing and security.
3. The concept of *reflective behaviour* indicates actor role for the work, which is challenging and quality seeking while the *repetitive behaviour* indicates pawn role, which is mechanically functional and has a tendency for routine performance.

This is measured with the help of an inventory consisting of 15 work related statements on 5 point continuum ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree developed (Mehta, 1989) for the purpose. The continuum is assigned score 5 to 1 or vice versa as per positive or negative nature of statements. As there were 5 items each for three major dimensions, each dimension would get a total score varying from 0 to 25. Higher the score, greater would be the positive tendency towards empowerment and lower the score greater would be the negative

tendency. The three total scores are combined to provide a final score on efficacy vs. self-efficacy and lower the score greater would be the tendency towards sense of powerlessness. Sense of efficacy would indicate a sense of psychological empowerment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION :

The average age of the respondents were found 39.6 years it reflects their younger age. Fifty five per cent of the respondents were having doctorate degree and remaining (45 per cent) possessed masters degree. Majority of respondents were actively engaged in organizing on campus and off-campus trainings to the practicing farmers and rural youths, associated in laying out on farm trials and frontline demonstrations.

Empowerment Style Of Extension Personnel—The data reported in Table 1 reveal that the mean score of extension personnel on initiative and reflective behaviour were poor. However, the mean score on self-esteem was found relatively better. The total obtained scores ranged from 16.05 to 17.28 out of obtainable score of 25. The mean scores were towards central value indicating thereby that the extension personnel were psychologically not strongly oriented towards empowerment. The distribution of extension personnel on these three components, as well as on the overall score reveal that the tendency was towards the negative end of the continuum. It shows that the extensionists are not charged with initiative and self-esteem rather they tend to pursue routinised behaviour and thus were more inclined to create powerlessness and dependency in the farming community.

Table 1. Empowerment style of extension personnel N = 40

Dimensions/Categories	Frequency	(%)	
1. Autonomy vs. dependence			
Low (<Mean - 1SD)	5	12.5	Mean =16.32 SD =2.68 Range =12-24
Medium (Mean \pm 1SD)	31	77.5	
High (>Mean + 1SD)	4	10.0	
2. Self-esteem vs. self depreciation			
Low (<Mean - 1SD)	10	25.0	Mean =17.28 SD =2.62 Range =13-23
Medium (Mean \pm 1SD)	21	52.5	
High (>Mean + 1SD)	9	22.5	
3. Reflective vs. repetitive behaviour			
Low (<Mean - 1SD)	6	15.0	Mean =16.05 SD =1.71 Range =13-20
Medium (Mean \pm 1SD)	27	67.5	
High (>Mean + 1SD)	7	17.5	
Efficacy vs. powerlessness			
Low (<Mean - 1SD)	5	12.5	Mean =49.65 SD =5.44 Range =40-67
Medium (Mean \pm 1SD)	28	70.0	
High (>Mean + 1SD)	7	17.5	

Outlook Of Extension Personnel About KVK Activities— The data (Table 2) indicated that majority (92.5 per cent) of extension personnel working in KVKs were having lack of cohesiveness and mutual understanding. This dimension plays an important role in following group or community approach. The desirable change is only possible through combined efforts of the extension functionaries. On the other hand, strict monitoring was found aside by the

competent authority (82.5 per cent). The reasons might be many but it requires a considerable thinking among concerned individuals. The monitoring can be done in well-planned way for moving on right direction. Training for extension personnel did not give much emphasis due to non-turn up of them (90 per cent) for getting training at KVKs. The projects like UPDASP are felt as a burden and they affect the KVK activities as perceived by the respondents.

Table 2. Outlook of extension personnel about KVK activities N=40

Statements	Responses	Frequency (%)
1. Cohesiveness among KVK staff	1. Lack of cohesiveness and mutual understanding	37(92.5)
2. Monitoring by competent authority	2. Lack of strict monitoring	33(82.5)
3. Trainings organized	3. Emphasis on need based trainings given	30(75.0)
4. On farm trials laid out	4. Location specific problems identified	31(77.5)
5. Frontline demonstrations conducted	5. Only relevant varieties demonstrated	21(52.5)
6. Trainings for extension personnel	6. Not much emphasis given due to non-participation of extension staff	36(90.0)
7. UPDASP and other projects affecting KVK activities	7. Affecting considerably	29(72.5)

Suggestions About Improving KVK Functioning: The data reported in Table 3 revealed that frequent visits by the scientists,

sufficient vehicle facilities, establishing demonstration units at the centers, advance trainings to the scientists, freedom to do work

Table 3. Suggestions about improving KVK functioning

Suggestions given	Frequency (%)	Rank
1. Strict monitoring and critical review of KVK activities	27(67.5)	VI
2. Fund availability on time	25(62.5)	VII
3. Frequent visit by the Zonal Coordinators and other scientists	33(82.5)	I
4. Advance trainings in agricultural technologies to the scientists	29(72.5)	IV
5. Computerized network among KVKs	11(27.5)	
6. Advance communication facilities	23(59.5)	VIII
7. Impact study over a period of time	25(62.5)	
8. Address the gender issues	9(22.5)	
9. Freedom to do work	28(70.0)	V
10. Quality seed production at the centre	26(65.0)	
11. Demonstration units at the centres	31(77.5)	III
12. Vehicle facilities at the KVKs	32(80.0)	II
13. Seed sale counter at the KVK	17(42.5)	
14. Documentation of the extension activities	9(22.5)	
15. Villagers' active involvement in all KVK activities	17(42.5)	

and strict monitoring were considered as most important factors for better functioning of KVKs. Such suggestions come a cross normally over a period of time from KVK staff, but kept aside. Whenever, authorities feel and reminded them get momentum for betterment. It requires concerted efforts to minimize such dilemmas.

CONCLUSION :

The extension personnel need to be reoriented through special training that empowers them such that they in turn, give up all that disempowers them and take initiative in creating power in people and help them realize their potential. In essence, the extension personnel perceived that they lack initiative and self-esteem as victims of repetitive routine behaviour. Cohesiveness and mutual understanding, strict monitoring of KVK activities by the scientists, organizing need based trainings, conducting on farm trails and frontline demonstrations properly, play an important role for strengthening extension strategy.

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