

Factors Influencing Attitude of Extension Professionals Towards Principles of Extension Education

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ABSTRACT

The role of extension in uplifting the condition of rural people is becoming prominent with the passage of time. Extension professionals have a responsibility to help the people in improving their livelihoods. In order to accomplish such tasks they follow certain principles which act as guidelines for them to deal with the rural situation. It is important to test that whether extension professionals are positive toward the principles of extension education or consider it outdated. The attitude of extension professionals toward principles of extension education lead to its applicability or inapplicability in field situation. Considering this pertinent issue the present paper is an attempt to determine the attitude of extension professionals toward principles of extension education and how this attitude is correlated with other variables. Data were collected through structured interview, administered on 100 extension professionals of Bhagalpur district of Bihar in the year 2016. The findings revealed that majority of extension professionals had favorable attitude (69%) toward principles of extension education. While about 14 per cent were having unfavorable attitude. Even though it is one time response of respondent for the statement; it is having implication on extension services. Identifying these implications was one of In-Tension of the study. Communication behavior (0.251) and extension system link (0.334) of the respondents had significant relationship with their attitude regarding principles at 1% significant level. In order to make attitude of extension agents more affirmative toward the principles of extension education the paper recommended extension workers to undergo regular exposure to formal, informal and mass-media sources, training, demonstration workshops, and conferences.

Key words: Principles; Attitude; Variables; Correlation; Extension;

The role of Extension Education in agriculture is important as it provides a connecting link between researchers and farmers. It provides various platforms which are responsible for the interaction of farmers and researchers and with the help of such platforms, technologies are developed and transfer to the farmers.

Extension professionals play an important role in accomplishing such tasks because they are supposed to know the principles of extension. It is because the principles of extension an extension professional know how to handle various rural situations. Leagans also holds out clearly on the need for sound knowledge of the principles for the extension workers. He points out that without this knowledge extension workers either

keep on laboring under some handicaps, or make grave mistakes, particularly in initial stages (*Dhama and Bhatnagar, 1987*)

Principles of extension as quoted by different scientists like *G.L Ray (2011)* generalized guidelines which form the basis for decision and action in a consistent way. The principles of extension as quoted by *Dahama and Bhatnagar (1987)* are in line with those of G L Ray except the principle of trained specialists.

Different principles have certain guidelines for extension professionals that are helpful in handling rural situations like principle of cultural difference depicts the fact that extension professional and farmers have a

cultural difference and consideration of culture of farmers while developing technology is an important criteria to win farmers' heart. While grassroots principle indicates that extension work should start with whatever resources a farmer has, change must start from the existing situation. Principle of indigenous knowledge promotes the use of indigenous knowledge that exist in nature's library while principle of interests and needs highlight the fact that needs and interests of farmers should be the prime concern for any extension professional. There should not be any kind of imposition from extension professionals' side. Doing a work inculcate maximum learning comes under the principle of learning by doing while principle of participation depicts the fact that people involvement in any programme raise their level of interest and enthusiasm as well as their importance. Principle of leadership focuses on identification of local leaders because a local leader act as the representative of that locality and through that leader persuasion up to maximum extent is possible. An extension professional must consider the compatibility of different technologies in different local situation as well as their way of dissemination, comes under the principle of adaptability while satisfactory results build trust of farmers on extension professionals comes under principle of satisfaction. Evaluation principle put emphasis over the continuous evaluation as it prevents stagnation.

These principles provide guidelines for action to the extension professionals so it is important to determine attitude of extension professionals toward these principles, whether they consider it appropriate or not for current situation.

Kelman (1958) pointed out that attitudes can foster identification with social groups, Attitude may be defined as predispositions to react to certain persons, objects, situations, ideas, etc., in a particular manner — not always consciously held (as are beliefs) nor readily verbalized (as are opinions), they are characterized as either affective or evaluative (*Gardner, & Lambert, 1972*). According to *Kerlinger (1973)*, attitude is an organized predisposition, to think, feels, perceive and behave forward a referent and cognitive object. *Crano and Prislin (2006)* defined attitude as "Attitudes are the evaluative judgments that integrate and summarize cognitive/affective reactions".

What In-tension of ex-tension means for extension professionals? Because by attaching the meaning to the term extension, "extending" relevant and useful information to the adult population at large, extensionists has assumed their responsibility on their own. Also they have tried their level best to differentiate education of extension science with formal education and they tried to find their own place in the ocean of education. Also it is pivotal to note that good number of extension studies throughout have proved that friends and neighbours are the most trusted sources of information, hence, In-tension of ex-tension emphasizes on development and strengthening of "Extension" System.

In these efforts the emphasis is on the term 'Extension', the term 'In-Tension' remained unexplored. What we mean to say is now it is opportune time to look into the term 'in-tension'. The term 'in-tension of ex-tension' is conceptualized as "the degree to which the philosophy, content, ideas, notions, objectives, principles, theory and models of 'ex-tension' have been internalized by the extensionists" (*Jirli and De 2010*). The term Extension Education as defined by *J. P. Leagans (1961)*, Extension education is an applied science consisting of content derived from research, accumulated field experiences and relevant principles derived from behavioural sciences synthesized with useful technology into a body of philosophy, principles, content and methods focused on the problems of out of school education for adults and youth. The definition is emphasizing on research output, service and education. These things can better be realized by internalizing the philosophy, content, ideas, notions, objectives, principles, theory and models of 'ex-tension' hence it is opportune time to 'In-Tensionise' the process of 'Ex-Tension'. *In-tensionised extension* at its root can provide potential answers to burning questions that are before development professionals. An understanding of the history of extension helps in understanding the concept of In-tensionsioned extension. Conceptually it looks like a utopian idea. But in the long run with concerted and committed efforts by all the actors of development it's becoming a reality.

There is need to analyze the hairline differences between the extension educationist and extension service provider. Many times we consider both terms as synonymous. There is lot of difference between the same.

Extension educationist: is a person with the background of agriculture and specialization of extension science and provides the knowledge and skills of extension and communication tools and techniques to the Extension Service Providers at regular intervals to bring the desirable changes in the behaviour of Extension Service Providers.

Extension service provider: is a person with the background of agriculture and specialization in the disciplines of agricultural and/or allied sciences who is serving a public or private institution and meant for dissemination of the technological advances to the intended communities and institutions based on needs after acquiring the extension and communication tools and techniques from extension educationist.

The research question with which the study began with “while rendering extension services the extension professionals remember/recall the principles of extension?” if yes, which are the principles they follow to the maximum extent? And what is the attitude towards principles of extension in general. By determining attitude of extension professionals toward principles of extension it is easy to determine the view of extension professional regarding its applicability in field situations. So the present paper is all about to discuss the attitude of extension professionals toward principles of extension and how this attitude is related to different other variables.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Bhagalpur district of Bihar. It is the third largest city in Bihar and the largest city in eastern Bihar. It is one of the major educational, commercial and political centers of eastern India. Bhagalpur was selected for the study because of the fact that the first post-graduate programme in extension education in the country was started from Bihar Agricultural College (now Bihar Agricultural University).

Extension professionals working in research and teaching institution, KVK and state departments were the respondents. A total of 100 respondents were selected randomly out of 250 respondents.

Sex, age, background, education, experience extension system link, job-satisfaction, communication behavior were taken as independent variable while attitude was dependent variable. Age of the respondents

were categorized into young, middle and old as per the government of India classification; variables like experience, communication behavior, extension system link and job satisfaction were categorized into high, medium, low based on descriptive statistics i.e mean and standard deviation. Communication behavior, Job-satisfaction and Extension System link were measured on specific scales.

The attitude is correlated with several independent variables. These independent variables have certain impact on the attitude of extension professionals. Measuring correlation between independent variables and attitude is expected to give those factors that make attitude more affirmative toward the principles of extension education.

In order to measure attitude of respondents a comprehensive interview schedule was prepared based on the interaction with the experts. Interview schedule was scaled on five-point Likert Scale. The respondents gave their level of agreement and disagreement on 73 statements on principles of extension. Based on their scores attitude level were categorized i.e. ($\geq x + \sigma$) as highly favourable, ($x \pm \sigma$) as favourable, and ($\leq x - \sigma$) as unfavourable. The higher the score, more favorable the attitude is. If we say highly favorable attitude this shows the strong agreement of extension professional regarding the principles of extension. They are quite sure that principles are appropriate for current scenario while a favorable attitude also shows agreement but the intensity is less in comparison to highly favorable. Unfavorable attitude signifies disagreement, it means they consider the principles are inappropriate for current scenario and it demands change.

The change in one variable is accompanied by change in another variable and definite relationships exist between the two, in order to show that there is a relation between two variables, correlation is used. The correlation coefficient (r) is the measure of degree of closeness of the linear relationships between two variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of respondents : The analysis Table 1 highlight the fact that out of total respondents ,44 per cent respondents were of middle age group category followed by 42 per cent and 14 per cent respondents from young and old age category. Similar findings were reported by *Al-Subaiee et al. (2005)* in their study “Extension

agents’ perceptions of sustainable agriculture in the Riyadh Region of Saudi Arabia” they found that the ages of the respondents ranged from 22 to 60. The mean age was 36.19 (SD= 7.91; N = 124. The majority (52.4%) of the extension agents were 31 to 40 years old.

Majority of respondents in the study were male (84%) and only (16%) were female. *Allahyan et al. (2008)* in their study “Extensionists attitude toward sustainable agriculture in Iran” found that most of the respondents were male (93.7%) and only (6.3%) were female. Equal percentage of respondents (50%) belonged to rural and urban background

Table 1. Profile of the respondents

Profile		%
Age	Old	14
	Medium	44
	Young	42
Sex	Male	84
	Female	16
Background	Urban	50
	Rural	50
Education	Graduate	33
	Post-graduate	20
	Doctorate	47
Communication Behavior	High	26
	Medium	68
	Low	06
Extension System Link	High	41
	Medium	31
	Low	28
Job-satisfaction	High	13
	Medium	80
	Low	07

Majority of respondents (47%) had doctorate degree followed by 20 per cent with post-graduate degree and 33 per cent respondents were having graduation degree. Contradictory findings were reported by *Bowen et al. (1994)* in their study” Job-satisfaction and Commitment of 4-H agents” The highest degree held by more than half of the respondents was a masters’ degree (59 %), followed by bachelor’s (32%) and doctorate (7%) degrees. Communication behavior of the respondents had been recorded in terms of formal source, informal source and mass media source of communication. Majority of respondents (68%) had medium level of communication behavior, 26 per cent had high level of communication behavior and 6 per cent had low level

of communication behavior. The reason of having high level of communication behaviour was due to their interest and enthusiasm and curiosity to know about their work while low level of communication behaviour was due to their lack of interest toward their work as well as constraint of time factor. Similar findings were reported by *Deoraj (2009)* in his study “A study on perception of extensionists regarding ICTs in extension service” found that majority of extension researchers (75%) had medium level of communication behavior, 14% had high level of communication behavior and 11 per cent had low level of communication behavior. And in case of extension service providers also majority (65%) had medium level of communication behavior, 11 per cent had high level of communication behavior and 24 per cent had low level of communication behavior.

Extension system link was operationalised as the participation in activities acquiring information on different concepts of extension education Majority of respondents (41%) belonged to high level of extension system link followed by medium 31 per cent and low level 28 per cent extension system link. The reason of being their high level in extension system link was due to the opportunities of frequent gathering in the organization in the form of seminars, demonstration, conferences etc. due to which linkages are established.

Majority of respondents (80%) had medium degree of job-satisfaction followed by 13 per cent high and 7 per cent low degree of job-satisfaction. The reason of being their low satisfaction was due to their less salary and their major involvement in other official work rather than extension work. Similar findings reported the cause of job-satisfaction like *Andrews (1990)* in his study”An assessment of the interaction of selected personal characteristics and perceptions of selected aspects of job satisfaction by Wisconsin Cooperative Extension agricultural agents” reported that increasing one’s educational level increases his or her level of job satisfaction. The current study also depicts the same fact that majority of respondents (47%) were having doctorate degree and majority of respondents belonged to medium level of job-satisfaction. So education might be the reason of their job satisfaction.

Attitude level of extension professionals toward principles of extension education.: It can be observed from the Table 2 that majority of the extension professionals (69%) had favorable attitude toward

principles of extension education followed by 17 per cent had highly favorable and 6 per cent had unfavorable attitude. This is due to the fact that professionals considered extension principles apt for present scenario and they were positive toward the applicability of these principles in field situations.

In the same study by *Singh and Jirli, (2018)* it was found that majority of the extension professionals (73%) had favorable attitude toward objectives of extension education followed by 21 per cent had favorable and 6 per cent had unfavorable attitude.

Table 2. Attitude level of extension professionals toward principles of extension education

Criteria	%
Highly Favorable	17
Favorable	69
Unfavorable	14

Correlation between the independent and dependent variables : A critical examination of the data presented in the above Table 3 reveals that in case of extensionists independent variable i.e. communication behavior and extension system link was significantly related to the attitude of extensionists regarding principles at 1% level of significance.

Table 3. Relationship between independent variables with the attitude of extension professionals regarding principles of extension education

Independent Variable	Correlation value 'r'
Age	0.070
Sex	-0.132
Background	-0.023
Education	0.002
Experience	0.042
Communication Behaviour	0.251**
Extension System Link	0.334**
Job satisfaction	0.077

*Correlation is significant at 5% level

**Correlation is significant at 1% level

Communication behavior and attitude of respondents regarding the principles of extension education : Relationship between communication behavior of the respondents and their attitude regarding principles was measured by testing the following hypothesis

“There is no relationship between communication behavior of the respondents and attitude regarding principles of extension”

Computed value of coefficient of correlation between the concerned communication behavior of the respondents and their attitude regarding principles of extension was found to be 0.251** as shown in Table 3. The following observations were recorded regarding the relationship between these two variables on the basis of co-efficient of correlation.

Firstly, relationship showed a tendency in the positive direction. Secondly relationship between the concerned two variables was weak. Thirdly, computed value of 'r' (0.251**) was found to be greater than tabulated value 'r' (0.210) with at 0.01 level of probability. Hence the relationship was significant.

Based on the above observation, the null hypothesis was rejected and hence it was concluded that communication behavior of the respondents had significant relationship with their attitude regarding principles of extension. This indicated that those respondents who were exposed to formal, informal and mass-media source of communication were having a favorable attitude toward extension principles.

Extension system link and attitude of respondents regarding the principles of extension education : Relationship between extension system link and their attitude regarding principles was measured by testing the following hypothesis.

“There is no relationship between extension system link of the respondents and attitude regarding principles of extension”

Computed value of coefficient of correlation between the concerned extension system link of the respondents and their attitude regarding principles of extension was found to be 0.334** as shown in **Table 3**. The following observations were recorded regarding the relationship between these two variables on the basis of co-efficient of correlation.

Firstly, relationship showed a tendency in the positive direction. Secondly relationship between the concerned two variables was moderate. Thirdly, computed value of 'r' (0.334**) was found to be greater than tabulated value 'r' (0.210) with at 0.01 level of probability. Hence the relationship was significant.

Based on the above observation, the null hypothesis was rejected and hence it was concluded that extension system link of the respondents had significant relationship

with their attitude regarding principles of extension. This indicated that those respondents who were exposed to demonstration, training, seminars, workshops, conferences, symposia etc. were having a favorable attitude toward extension principles.

CONCLUSION

It can be easily observed from the findings that majority of extension professionals had positive attitude regarding principles of extension education. This clearly depicts the fact that they showed agreement with the principles and positive about its applicability in field

situation. It can also be observed from the findings that communication behavior directly affects the attitude of extension professional regarding the principles of extension education hence in order to make extension professionals attitude more affirmative, regular exposure with the formal, informal and mass-media source is indeed needed. Extension system link also showed significant relationship with the attitude of extension professional hence regular participation in demonstration, training, seminars workshops will create a difference in the attitude of extension professionals regarding principles of extension education.

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