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Review on Training Need Analysis of Agricultural Officers and Agricultural Extension Officers

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Introduction

The first and foremost activity for planning a good training programme is to assess the training needs. Training is an important process of capacity building of individuals as to improve the performance. Hence, training needs assessment is vital to the training process. It helps to identify present problems and future challenges to be met through training and development. The Agriculture Extension Officers help in disseminating the improved agricultural technologies of various disciplines including both agricultural and horticultural technologies to the farmers. With a view to achieve a high level of production, it is not enough to accelerate generation of scientific technologies but it is equally necessary to transfer the latest technology from the research system to the ultimate users i.e., the farmers which is possible by refreshing and updating the knowledge and skill acquired during the periodical pre-in-service training through systematic training courses. This study stress the significance of needs assessment of Agricultural Extension Officers training programs to enhance their performance and the success of the program carried out by them. The needs assessment should be based on Agricultural Extension Officers' needs, wants and aspirations since they can easily identify their own plus and minus points. It is important that all employees must update on their knowledge periodically and acquaint with the ever changing environment of governance. The Govt. machinery would have to be continuously attend to the changing needs.

Review on training needs of department of agriculture

Findings from a study by Menon and Annamali (1979) indicated that the most significant training needs of village level workers in Tamil Nadu, India were specialization in agriculture, administration of extension programs, extension program planning, farmer training methods, understanding the farm as a social system, agricultural education planning, and methods of human resources development.

Extension agents in seven areas, Ayeyarwady, Yangon, Bago. Magway, Mandalay, Sagaing Divisions and southern Shan State of Myanmar the training about extension education (mean=3.80) is the most immediate need followed by high emphasis on trainings related to major crops production technology (mean=3.77), post-harvest technology (mean=3.58), and market information (mean=3.65) for these products. They expressed little need in training about plant protection (mean=2.42) and farm mechanization (mean=2.17) (Cho, 2002).

A study conducted in Andhra Pradesh regarding training needs of Agricultural Extension officers covering 38 mandals of Warangal District. The most important need was "IPM practices in cotton" (100 %) followed by INM in paddy (80.90%), cotton production technology (76.60%), soil sample testing procedures (68.10%), chilli production technology (57.50%), green manure (55.30%), paddy production technology (51.10%), vermicompost preparation (44.70%), paddy BHP management (38.30%), paddy hybrid seed production technologies (31.90%), pluses plant protection (29.80%), pesticide analysis procedures (25.50%), turmeric production technology (23.40%) and computer literacy training (17.00%) (Sivanarayana *et al*., 2002).

Tladi (2004) in an assessment of training needs of extension agents in South-Central Botswana found that the agents needed training in 14 job skill areas including among others, interpersonal communication skills, practical farm skills, conducting needs assessment surveys and mobilizing people to form groups.

Chizari, Alibaygi, and Breazeale (2006) found that the most important training needs of multi-functional extension workers in Isfahan Province, Iran were in the areas of participatory extension, participatory techniques in rural development, biodiversity protection methods, sustainable fertilization methods, and improved utilization of indigenous knowledge of rural people.

Regarding assessment of technical competencies (agronomic practices) needed by agricultural officers in the Punjab out of 14 training needs of AOs the top three (most important) were: (1) the ability to describe the agronomic practices of minor crops (DV=0.68) (2) the ability to advise about the plant protection of minor crops (mean=0.62); and (3) the ability to guide farmers about the seed rate of minor crops (DV=0.56). The training needs with lowest importance levels included: (1) the ability to guide farmers about the seed rate of major crops (DV=0.21); (2) the ability to advice about the fertilizer requirement of major crops (DV=0.36); and (3) the ability to guide about the irrigation requirement of major crops (mean=0.45). (Khan *et al*., 2007).

Kermanshah Province of the West Iran agricultural extension officers required training regarding sustainability were agricultural waste management (MWDS = 8.40) followed by participatory technology development (MWDS = 7.02); water conservation (MWDS = 6.73); integrated crop management (MWDS = 6.50); and soil erosion (MWDS = 5.82) (Alibaygi and Zarafshani, 2008).

Extension officers of Nigeria needed training in the following areas: communication skill (X =4.60), planning demonstration (X =4.60), Evaluation of trials (X =4.57), farmers (X=4.52), rodents and pest control (X=4.48), recording and reporting (X=4.46), establishment of SPAT (X=4.46), formation of women groups (X-4.35), nutrition and food utilization demonstration (X=4.24) and farmer identification (X=4.18). These findings indicate that the areas in which respondents expressed training needs are very relevant to knowledge and skills required for executing extension programmes as well as responding to farmers' needs. (Omoregbee, and Ajayi, 2009).

With regard to extension officers in animal husbandry department first, training which includes farming and breeding management as well as content delivery is critically needed to enable Agricultural Extension Officers to become better and more relevant in performing their duties (Azizah, 2011).

The most training needed regarding mechanized farming in punjab for agricultural officers were: (1) the ability to operate modern machines, equipment and implements (dv = 1.51): and (2) the ability to describe the maintenance procedure of farm machinery (dv=1.50). The training needs with lowest importance level included: (1) the ability to describe the use of various agricultural hands tools and implements (dv=0.86); and (2) the ability to develop at list of modern machinery required for a big model farm (dv=0.95). (khan *et al*., 2011).

The Block Extension Supervisors of Central Agricultural Zone of Delta State Nigeria needed training on skills for preparation/ use of au-

dio-visual instructional materials (M=2.75) indigenous technology development (M=2.75) followed by human relations/leadership skills (M=2.50), method demonstration (M=2.50), and. however, the Block Extension Supervisor disagreed with training in statistical analysis of field data (M=2.13).(B.O.Ovwigho, 2011).

Agriculture Extension Officers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should be trained in the horticultural related activities as the demand for fruits, vegetables and flowers are increasing and there is an increasing pressure on horticulturist to produce more fruits, vegetable and flowers with the changing lifestyle and eating habits. (Khan *et al*., 2012)

Training needs of agricultural extension personnel of seven districts in Meghalaya *viz*., East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills, Ri Bhoi, East Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and South Garo Hills in the state. Soil Science (mean=1.52) is ranked as the first and most needed area of training, this is due to the fact that the trainings in this area are rarely conducted. Also, with the introduction of Soil Testing Laboratory, many progressive farmers are going for soil testing before planting their crops. Thus, the extension personnel need to improve their knowledge and skills regarding the proper measures to be taken in order to properly manage the soil followed by entomology (mean=1.51), agronomy (mean=1.51) and plant pathology (mean=1.48) (Nongtdu *et al*., 2012)

Training needs of Agriculture Extension Officers of Himachal Pradesh State regarding organic farming. 51% of extension personnel reported medium training needs followed by high training needs of 26% in biological methods of pest control. For bio-rational pest management techniques, the majority of them reported medium or high training needs, 43% and 37% respectively. Record keeping and certification standards are an important component in organic farming without which the produce can not be sold as certified organic, and the majority of respondents reported a medium (40%) or high (24%) training needs indicating that they possessed inadequate knowledge in this area. Without proper grading and packing the best price in the market will not be achieved, and extension workers reported training needs of medium (38%) and high (26%) in this area.(Yadav *et al*., 2013)

Conclusions

Based on findings training programmes have to be planned well by the training institutes and government should take into consideration of the training needs of the AOs and AEOs so that they may acquire the relevant Knowledge and skill in the new techniques and the same may be imparted to the farmers and they can also upgrade the existing knowledge in better manner. Moreover farmers are not fully aware of appropriate farming techniques, management skills, and relevant programmes available by services. Extension officer needs to guide the farmers to acquire new problem solving techniques and knowledge. So training needs plays a very important role in the lives of agricultural personnel as well as farmers.

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