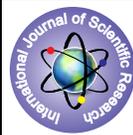


Teaching and Training Strategies for the Production of Bestfit Professionals in the Present Agricultural Scenario



Agriculture

KEYWORDS :

A. Sailaja

Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Extension, College of Agriculture, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad.

I.S. Rao

Professor & Head, Department of Agricultural Extension, College of Agriculture, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad.

ABSTRACT

In this LPG era, livelihoods of farmers are succumbed to rapid changes. For the improvement of their livelihoods, they need facilitation support from development professionals. This also enables to undertake focused extension activities through group approach. Restructuring of teaching and training strategies results in the production of skilled development professionals which in turn enables them to move effectively towards sustainable rural development by ensuring livelihood security. Building human resource competence and capacity building, course curricula design and modification, delivery systems and strengthening of infrastructure are the components to be reengineered to make education system effective. Extension agencies need to emphasize on new training approaches, modalities and orientations based on need assessment of clientele. These changes emphasize on attitudinal development of clientele which helps him to move in a facilitative mode with the farming community for the livelihoods improvement and sustainable development.

As the economy grows, the skills of developmental professionals also needs to gear up accordingly. People's life is centered around preparing for & practicing livelihoods. Farmers livelihood choices are influenced by a variety of factors, including geographic, cultural, caste & family origins, education, exposure, knowledge, skills and resources at hand, experience & socio-economic and ecological setting of the individual household. While some are still continuing traditional livelihoods or family occupations, some have moved or moving to newer livelihoods. As such livelihoods are undergoing rapid changes in the context of liberalization, privatization, globalization and climate change. Although we have achieved food grain self sufficiency, there is a need to have evergreen revolution in view of expanding population. The changing economic scenario in India and emerging need of agricultural technologies to meet the issues of food and nutritional security, poverty alleviation, diversified marketing demand, export opportunities and environmental concern are posing new challenges to technology dissemination. As economy grows, consumer preferences also change & shape the demands.

The need of the hour is the facilitation support of the development professionals to the farmers to enable them to get rid of poverty through improvement of their livelihoods. This also helps in making extension activities sustainable and more focussed through group extension approach. The extension worker needs to motivate, encourage formation of commodity oriented committees through bottom up approach to enable them in making sustainable agriculture more profitable. Thus, Indian farmers can confront the challenges of globalization.

Harmonizing science and technological inputs will then become inescapable imperative to nurture rural livelihoods with sustainable development of natural resources. Good quality graduates of today are good teachers, researchers, extension scientists, and entrepreneurs of tomorrow. To build such skilled development professionals, agricultural education and trainings given to them needs to be restructured so that it paves way to ensure livelihood security through off farm and non-farm employment and thus contribute to sustainable rural development. This enables the clientele to meet the challenges with greater self confidence and self motivation, determination, zeal and commitment.

Strategies:

I. Teaching

Reengineering education system depends on the following four components:

1. Building human resource (HR) competence and capacity building.

Man power planning which includes need assessment of professionals in specific subject areas has to be done. Teaching and education capabilities of faculty needs to be strengthened through HRD due to changed role of teacher from informer of knowledge to knowledge navigator.

2. Course curricula design & modification.

- Care needs to be taken in avoiding repetition of context.
- Due consideration of all stakeholders must be taken into account while formulating course contents. Studies on relevance & utility of agricultural education have to be taken as a basis to reorient academic programmes to meet emerging global market forces so as to help in improving agriculture based industry and competitiveness in world arena.
- To improve livelihoods of poor in changed economic scenario, development professional needs to provide facilitation support. To play this role effectively, development professionals needs a holistic understanding of concept & framework of livelihoods - contexts, capitals, arrows, their interplay, gaps, opportunities, processes of interventions & a way forward for poor in command of their livelihoods creative extension processes of movement from the current reality to a vision of improved portfolio of decent livelihoods. Hence, course curriculum should necessarily include a course on 'livelihoods and resources' the knowledge of which enables development professional to focus effectively towards livelihood enhancement of poor and thus contribute for sustainable rural development.

3. Delivery systems.

The envisaged shift in education delivery is from lectures to active work on projects, interactive and case study based, modern innovative, more practical and skill based participatory methods such as seminars, group discussion and simulation exercises so as to influence critical reasoning, creative thinking and analytical skills.

4. Strengthening of infrastructure

As State Agricultural Universities are the engines for social & economic development for masses they need to be equipped with state of art facilities viz., multimedia labs, education technology cells, model plants for effective teaching. Indian Council of Agricultural Research needs to provide adequate funds for academic excellence to enable quality instruction.

II. Training

Extension agencies need to adopt new training approaches, modalities and orientations based on assessed training needs of the clientele groups. They need to move way from set quantitative targets to qualitative targets to impart specific characteristics to development professionals working in third generation

extension (interactive approach by encouraging independent learners). They need to become 'insiders' rather than 'outsider' and this calls for a new relationship between extension worker and farmer groups.

Secondly, field level extension staff need to develop a more positive attitude towards farmers groups and to take a lower view of their own expertise. Instead of the emphasis on transfer of new knowledge to farmer groups, there needs to be a greater stress on attitudinal development which will help the extension worker to meaningfully relate to participant groups – to develop the skills of listening, of observing and particularly of facing humbly in a facilitative mode so as to have a better understanding of their livelihoods situations and build thereupon. To build such skilled extension staff following changes need to be made in the way they are trained.

I. Approach – Participatory approaches

The trainer and trainees need to jointly determine the objec-

tives and other elements of training through creating experiential learning situation.

II. Modality & Orientation

A decentralized training plan which consists of number of lesson plans should have a mix of six training orientations with more emphasis on process rather than context and enable them to practice a specific concept taught.

More of discovery based learning methods like brainstorming, role play, field trips need to be used to structure the contents to the learner, problem and situation. This results in modification of attitude and interpersonal skills though learning by doing.

Each training institute needs to give feedback on each trainees behavior during training, to the concerned sponsoring agency so that it helps in deputing right persons for right areas in a right time for a right cause in a right way and this avoids repeated deputation of only few selected persons for training.

REFERENCE

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