

A study on feedback behaviour of extension personnel working in private sectors

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in four districts North Karnataka. The research design adopted was *ex- post- facto*, since the phenomenon has already occurred and is continuing. A structured questionnaire was consisting of various indices, tests and scales to measure the variables. The results revealed that majority (82 %) of the private extension personnel were found in 'medium communication behaviour' category. Further, majority of the respondents (60 %) informed the 'agriculture problems' to 'higher officers' followed by 'discussion with fellow workers (50 %). Information on 'extension programmes' feedback to higher officers was (65 %). Maximum feedback was observed in case of 'sale of inputs' (70 %) which was informed to higher officers.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of meeting holistic needs of increasing agricultural production in sustainable manner, agricultural extension has a crucial role to play. Its normal task of transferring and disseminating appropriate technologies and agronomic practices would not be sufficient. Extension agencies and workers will need to exercise a more provocative and participatory role to serve as a knowledge / information system among agricultural researchers, trainers and farmers.

Private extension also helps in sharing, augmenting public sector extension efforts. It has been universally recognized that institutional pluralism in the development of extension services contributes to overall success. To achieve differing agricultural goals and serve diverse target population, a combination of public, private and voluntary extension efforts is needed.

In the era of information technology, where information plays a vital and decisive role in taking strategic decision, extension personnel will have to acquire latest knowledge as well as skills in use of various electronic devices such as computers, multimedia, internet etc. The day is not very far when tele/video conferencing will be common means to interact with large number of farmers to extend

extension messages or sharing market information by extension personnel. In coming years, the area of 'Management and 'Communication skills' will be the largest segment for competency building among agricultural extension personnel for supporting farming community (Tripathi, 2004).

This research study would provide an insight for studying the feedback behaviour of private extension personnel. Accordingly, the present study has been planned and conducted in North Karnataka to study the feedback behaviour of private extension personnel and to assess the relationship of selected personal, socio-psychological characteristics of private extension personnel in respect of their feedback behaviours.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in four districts of North Karnataka, namely, Dharwad, Belgaum, Gadag, Haveri. Totally 8 Talukas were selected for the study. The private extension personnel were considered as respondents *i.e.* The Sales Officers, Marketing Officers, Sales Executives, consultants, managers of private input agencies/firms *viz.*, seed firms, fertilizer firms, agro-chemicals and irrigation equipments, biotech, firms, etc. operating in four districts of the study area

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were considered as population for the present investigation. The research design adopted was *ex- post-facto*. Total sample size was 180.

The feedback variable was quantified by using the scale developed by Pandey (1970) with suitable modifications to suit the different respondents. The scale were consisted of several items related feedback of extension personnel. The data were collected against each item listed. Each item of the feedback scale was assigned a numerical score. The scores of all the items were summed up to get feedback score of individual respondents.

A structured questionnaire consisting of various indices, tests and scales to measure the variables were prepared in consultation with experts and review of literature. Different statistical tests were employed to analyze the data. Besides frequency and percentage and means, various descriptive and inferential statistics were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings obtained from the present study are presented below:

Overall feedback behaviour of private extension personnel:

Feedback is an essential element of the communication process, which makes the communication cycle complete. Feedback defined as “the response a receiver gives a sender as a result of the sender’s message”. Feedback is thus a corrective mechanism, which tells the communicator how they are going, and it serves as a key to understanding the transactional nature of communication.

The findings presented in the Fig.1 reveals that majority of the private extension personnel (82%) were belonging to ‘medium feedback’ category, followed by 15 per cent of the respondents found in ‘high feedback category’.

Feedback behaviour of private extension personnel:

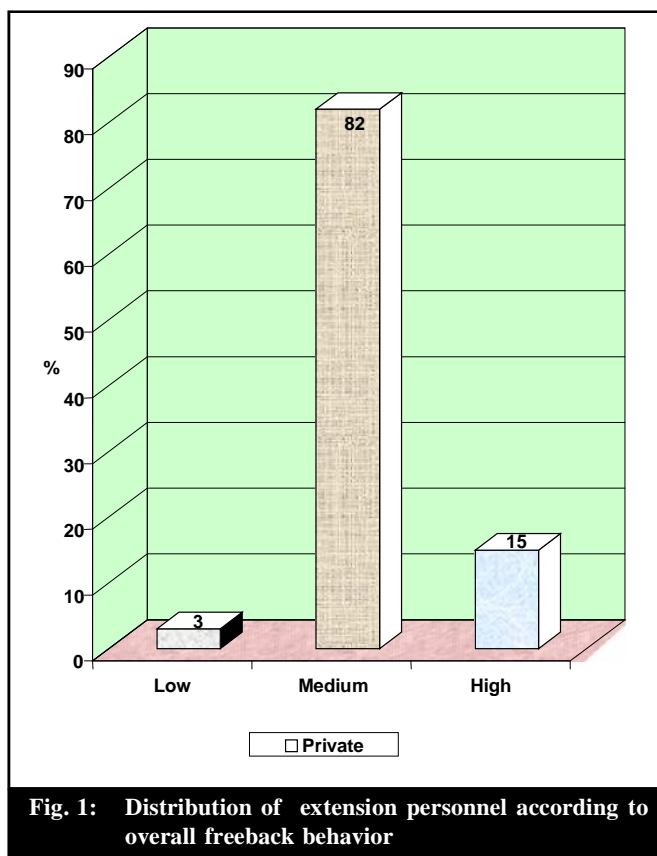


Fig. 1: Distribution of extension personnel according to overall feedback behavior

The findings presented in the Table 1 reveal that 60 per cent of private extension personnel informed ‘Agriculture Programmes’ to higher officers followed by ‘discussion with fellow workers (50 %). Information on ‘extension programmes’ feed back to higher officers was observed to be 65 %. Maximum feedback was observed in case of ‘sale of inputs’ (70 %) which was informed to higher officers. Since, it is mandatory to feedback information on sales to the area managers regularly in monthly meetings.

Regression analysis (Table 2) revealed that experience, income and job satisfaction were significant in contributing to the feedback behaviour of private

Table 1: Feedback behaviour of extension personnel working in private sector		Details of the activities													
Sr. No.	Acts performed	Agriculture problems		Extension programmes		Performance of technology advocated		Follow up work		Sale of inputs		Farmers reactions		Facilities	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Discussed with fellow workers	90	50	14	8	99	55	63	35	65	36	94	52	76	42
2.	Informed to higher officers	108	60	117	65	117	65	104	58	126	70	99	55	115	64
3.	Shared in monthly meetings	72	40	104	58	85	47	72	40	86	48	104	58	-	-
4.	Writing success stories	36	20	68	38	45	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Writing news articles	23	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2: Correlation coefficients of independent variables of private extension personnel with their feedback behaviour

Independent variables	Feedback behaviour
	Private (n=180)
Age	-0.121
Education	0.017
Experience	-0.042
Income	-0.0166 *
Training	-0.199 **
Family back ground	-0.083
Mass media exposure	0.152 *
Job facility	0.102
Job satisfaction	-0.040
Achievement motivation	0.234 **

extension personnel. This might be the probable reason for the above finding.

Relationship of feedback behaviour and selected personnel characteristics of private extension personnel:

Feedback behaviour of private extension personnel is related with mass media utilization and achievement motivation. This indicated the private extension personnel who had higher level of mass media utilization and achievement motivation were found to provide more feedback. Income and training were negative significant relationship with feedback.

It is quite logical that extension personnel who have undergone training and more job satisfaction and high achievement motivation might have been exposed to more knowledge and successful in performing their work. This in turn motivated them to give more feedback to higher officers.

Conclusion:

Feedback is very important concept in communication behaviour. Feedback is responsible for continuous communication process. The findings of the

present study revealed that majority of the private extension personnel (82%) belonged to 'medium feed back' category. For continuous and effective communication in extension work, there is need to increase and improve the feedback behaviour of extension personnel. This can be done by encouraging the grass root extension personnel to give effective and more feedback to the superiors and higher officers. Thus, providing feedback by extension personnel to Agriculture Assistant to greater extent will certainly help in the formulation of future farm messages.

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