

A Study on Feedback Behaviour of Extension Personnel of Karnataka State Department of Agriculture

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Abstract : The study was conducted during the year 2004-05 in four districts of North Karnataka namely Dharwad, Belgaum, Gadag and Haveri. The extension personnel of 'Karnataka State Department of Agriculture' [KSDA] under government sector i.e. AAOs and AAs are the grass root level workers engaged in transfer of technology process for KSDA were considered as respondents. Among them number of AAOs and AAs selected for the study are 40 and 140 respectively. A structured questionnaire consisting of various indices, tests and scales was prepared in consultation with experts and review of literature to measure the variables. The results revealed that majority (76 %) of the government extension personnel were found in 'medium communication behaviour' category. Majority of the respondents (68 %) informed the 'agriculture problems' to 'higher officers' followed by 'shared in monthly meeting' (65 %). Seventy per cent of the government extension personnel informed extension programmes to higher officers and 63 per cent of the respondents shared in monthly meetings. Feedback with UAS scientists was observed only in case of 'Agriculture problems' in order to get possible solutions to solve the problems.

Key words: Information acquisition; communication; feedback.

Introduction

There are three systems involved in agriculture development process namely 'Research system', 'Extension system' and 'Client system'. The research system generates knowledge; the extension system disseminates the same to the farmers (Client system). Therefore, a constant flow of information from 'Research system' to 'Extension system' and there on to farmers is necessary for rapid agricultural development. This flow of information comprises information acquisition (input), information processing (processing), information dissemination (output) and feedback (response) (Shinde, 1990). In the present context of 'Globalization' and 'Privatization', no study has been attempted to study the communication pattern and different dimensions of communication and feedback pattern of extension personnel of private sector. This research study would provide an insight for studying the communication pattern of extension personnel working in private sector. Accordingly, the present study was planned and conducted in North Karnataka to study the feedback behaviour of extension personnel working in the Karnataka State Department of Agriculture' [KSDA] and to assess the relationship of selected personal, socio-psychological characteristics of extension personnel in respect of their feedback behaviour.

Material and Methods

The study was conducted during the year 2004-05 in four districts of North Karnataka namely Dharwad, Belgaum, Gadag and Haveri. Totally 8 taluks were selected for the study. The extension personnel of 'Karnataka State Department of Agriculture' [KSDA] i.e. AAOs and AAs the grass root level workers engaged in transfer of technology process for KSDA

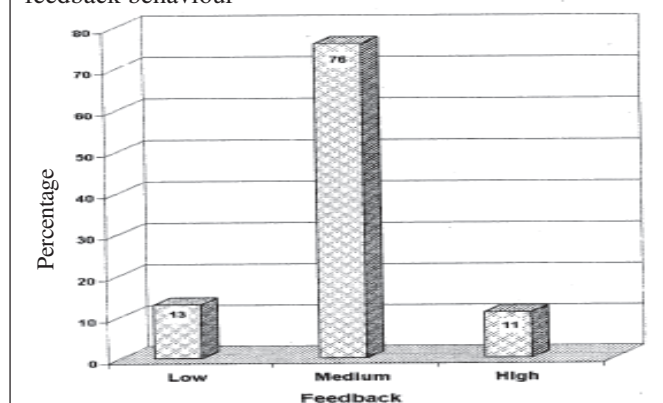
were considered as respondents. Among them number of AAOs and AAs selected for the study are 40 and 140 respectively. The research design adopted was ex- post- facto, since the phenomenon has already occurred and is continuing. The feedback variable was quantified by using the scale developed by Pandey (1970) followed by Shinde [1990] with suitable modifications to suit the different categories of respondents. The objectives of the research study was to study the feedback activities of government extension personnel, the feedback activities like extension programmes, follow up work, supply of inputs and farmers reactions were included based on the review of literature and discussion with experts from Dept. of Agriculture. These activities were included considering the present nature of their job. The scale consists of several items related feedback of extension personnel. The data was collected against each item listed. Each item of the feedback scale was assigned a numerical score of one. 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 viz correlation, regression were employed to analyze the data. Besides frequency and percentage means and various descriptive and inferential statistics were used.

Results and Discussion

Overall feedback behaviour of 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,

Fig. Distribution of extension personnel according to overall feedback behaviour



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 revealed that majority of the government extension personnel (76%) belonged to 'medium feedback' category, followed by 13 per cent of the respondents found in 'low feedback category'. A very meager percentage [11 %] in 'high feedback' category. Though feedback is important element in communication process and helps to know the effectiveness of communication process and exert control over future messages, majority of the respondents might not have given much importance to the feedback process. This may be the reason for the majority of the respondents belonged to 'medium feedback' category and very meager percentage in 'high feedback' category.

Feedback behaviour of government extension personnel : The feedback behaviour was further analysed to know different activities which the extension personnel feedback by using various acts/ methods. The results of the table-2 indicated that majority of the respondents (68 %) informed the 'agriculture problems' to 'higher officers' followed by 'shared in monthly meeting' (65 %). Seventy per cent of the government extension personnel informed extension programmes to higher

officers and 63 per cent of the respondents shared in monthly meetings. With respect to the 'performance of technology advocated to farmers', the information feed back to 'higher officers' by 76 per cent of the respondents, whereas, 72 per cent shared the information in monthly meetings. Feedback with UAS scientists was observed only in case of 'Agriculture problems' in order to get possible solutions to solve the problems. Almost all the activities were informed to higher officers. It is mandatory to feedback the activities mentioned in the table-1 to higher officers to get suggestions and solutions, which ultimately results in the better performance of extension personnel. The possible reason might be that as part of their job the extension workers were attending fortnightly meetings to report work done during previous period and extension activities organized and future activities to be conducted. The findings were in conformity with the findings of Sridhar (1977) and Bhole (1985). Sridhar (1977) reported that the extension personnel made the personnel contacts with the subject matter specialists of the University for providing feedback in terms of farmer's needs as well as problems and reactions about the farm recommendations. Bhole (1985) observed that the majority of AOs working under 'T and V' system had a feedback to the SMSs and superiors other than SMSs in the form of farm problems. Feedback of 'farm problems' is common in both reviews and in the present investigation.

Relationship of feedback behaviour and selected personnel characteristics of government extension personnel : The correlation co-efficient presented in Table- 3 indicated that only training, mass media utilization, job satisfaction and achievement motivation were found to be significantly related to feedback behaviour of government extension personnel. Only training is negatively significantly related at 5 per cent level of probability. The significant positive relationship of these variables clearly indicates that the government extension personnel who had higher level of mass media utilization, job satisfaction and achievement motivation were found to provide more feedback. There is no evidence to support or contradict these findings.

Table- 2. Feedback behaviour of government extension personnel

S. No		Details of the activities													
		Agriculture Problems		Extension programmes		Performance of technology reactions		Follow up work		Supply of inputs		Farmers reactions		Facilities	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Discussed with fellow workers	81	45	94	52	76	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	77	43
2	Informed to higher officers	122	68	126	70	137	76	122	68	113	63	113	58	108	60
3	Informed to Scientists of UAS	36	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	Shared in monthly meetings	117	65	113	63	130	72	97	54	90	50	90	47	0	0
5	a. Writing Success stories	-	-	58	32	68	38	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	b. Writing News articles	63	35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 3. Correlation coefficients of independent variable of government extension personnel with their feedback behaviour

Independent variables	Feedback behaviour	
	Government	[n=180]
1. Age	-0.046	
2. Education	-0.031	
3. Experience	0.076	
4. Income	0.031	
5. Training	-0.156 *	
6. Family		
Back ground	0.054	
7. Mass media		
Exposure	0.291 **	
8. Job facility	-0.083	
9. Job satisfaction	0.221 **	
10. Achievement		
Motivation	0.280 **	
* Significant at 5 % level of probability		
* * Significant at 1 % level of probability		

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It can be concluded from the study that 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 government extension personnel (76%) 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 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.