ATTITUDE OF EXTENSION PERSONNEL TOWARDS FACILITATION UNDER AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT AGENCIES OF UTTARAKHAND, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to know the attitude of extension personnel towards facilitation under Agricultural Technology Management Agencies. For that purpose an attitude scale was constructed. Total 200 samples were selected by using simple random sampling without replacement. But only 120 respondents returned their filled in questionnaires which were accepted for final analysis. The findings showed that majority of respondents (69.17%) had moderate level of favourable attitude towards facilitation. Attitude of extension personnel towards facilitation had negative and significant correlation with ‘age’ and ‘service experience’. A positive and significant correlation was observed between ‘educational qualification’. On the other hand attitude of extension personnel towards facilitation had positive and significant correlations with ‘educational qualification’ and ‘knowledge on andragogy’ and ‘knowledge on group dynamics’.

Key words: Attitude, ATMA, Extension personnel, Facilitation.

India started the process of reforms in extension system by introducing Agricultural Technology Management Agencies (ATMAs). ATMA was pilot tested through National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) and based on its performance a new scheme called “Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms” was introduced to operationalise agricultural extension reforms across the country in 2005. The scheme aims at making extension system farmer-driven and farmer-accountable. One of the major focuses of the scheme is to provide extension support to a group of farmers rather than to individual farmers (Anonymous, n.d.). After the reforms extension agent now becomes a facilitator rather than an expert (DAC, n.d.). Its role as a facilitator of agricultural knowledge system would only increase as more participants from private sector would get involved in extension (Sulaiman and van den Ban, 2000). Braakman and Edwards (2002) mentioned that attitude is foundation of facilitation skills. Therefore, an understanding of the level of attitude towards facilitation of the extension personnel under the new situation will go a long way in accelerating the process of developing agriculture. Keeping this in mind the present study was conducted.

The study was conducted in the state of Uttarakhand purposively. The state has lot of potential for agricultural development. Of late the programme of Agricultural Technology Management Agency was launched in the state. Thus, the locale is very conducive to carry out a study on attitude of extension personnel towards facilitation.

For selection of extension personnel, Block Technology Team (BTT) members of ATMAs were selected for the present study since they are actively involved in facilitating farmers’ groups. In Uttarakhand there are 95 BTTS. A list of BTT members were collected from State Agricultural Management and Extension Training Institute (SAMETI), Uttarakhand. At the time of collection of the list it had a list of 48 BTTs. All those 48 BTTs were selected purposively since that was the list of BTT members available at researcher’s convenient source. These BTTS had 350 members. From that

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list finally 200 samples were selected by using simple random sampling without replacement. But only 120 respondents returned their filled in questionnaires which were accepted for final analysis.

Independent variables for the study were age, educational qualification, service experience, job satisfaction, in-service training received, job values cherished (Kumar, 1994) and modified by (Jethi, 2006), motivational profile (Kumar, 1994), achievement motivation (Reddy, 1978), knowledge of extension personnel on group dynamics and knowledge of extension personnel on andragogy. For measuring knowledge of extension personnel on group dynamics and andragogy, two knowledge tests were developed where index of difficulty and index of discrimination were analysed. In case of knowledge test on group dynamics reliability was calculated by Kudar-Richarson formula (K-R20) and it was found as 0.71. In case of knowledge of extension personnel on andragogy the reliability value in terms of K-R20 was found as 0.6.

Attitude of extension personnel towards facilitation was the dependent variable for the present study. An attitude scale was developed by using Likert technique as mentioned by Edward (1957) to measure the variable. In the final scale there were 20 items which were selected through the procedure of item analysis as given by Edwards (1957). Through Chronbach alpha method, reliability of the scale was found as 0.76 which is high.

During the data collection the respondents were asked to give their opinion on a 5-point continuum scale comprising of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. For positive statements score 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 were assigned for strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. For negative statements the scoring pattern was reversed. Based on the total score obtained by the respondents they were categorised into three groups by using mean (X̄) and standard deviation (σ) as less favourable, moderately favourable and highly favourable.

The Table 1 indicates that most (69.17%) of the trainers had moderately favourable attitude towards facilitation. It was followed by less favourable (15.83%) and highly favourable (15.00%) attitude. From the findings it can be concluded that most of the respondents had less to moderately favourable attitude towards facilitation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less favourable</td>
<td>Below 28.17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately favourable</td>
<td>28.17 to 39.85</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>69.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly favourable</td>
<td>Above 39.85</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
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* Significant at 0.05 level of probability, ** Significant at 0.01 level of probability.
The results of correlation of personal, psychological and professional characteristics of extension personnel with their attitude towards facilitation are shown in Table 2. The table shows that attitude of extension personnel towards facilitation had negative and significant correlation with ‘age’ (r = -0.370) and service experience (r = -0.354). This implies that young and newly recruited extension personnel have more favourable attitude towards facilitation. Again, a positive and significant correlation (r = 0.392) was observed with ‘education’. These may be due to the fact that young, newly recruited were more educated and highly concerned for facilitation process. It was also found that ‘achievement motivation’ has positive and significant relationships with extension personnel’s attitude towards facilitation. Persons with high achievement motivation maintained some standard of excellence to get satisfaction from success. Extension personnel with high achievement motivation therefore, developed a positive attitude towards facilitation to maintain a standard of excellence in their works. The findings also revealed that there were a positive and significant correlation with knowledge on andragogy (r = 0.422) and knowledge on group dynamics (r = 0.332). It indicates that respondent having higher knowledge on andragogy and group dynamics had more favourable attitude towards facilitation. It is obvious because knowledge on principle of adult learning and group dynamics are pre requisite for facilitation. Therefore, person who is knowledgeable in these aspects definitely have more favourable attitude towards facilitation. The findings imply that to improve the attitude of extension personnel towards facilitation, these variables should be considered to get a better result.

REFERENCES