

Advantages of the General Agricultural Extension approach

It is considered as classical and common approach to extension in most countries.

1. It can interpret national government policies and procedures to rural people.

It can be used by both those in political power and by top professional officers in government, to assist in implementation of national agricultural development programs.

2. Usually covers the whole nation. There are officers and staff in every political division, this ensures the advantage of continuity in the extension program.
3. Relatively easy to control by central government.
4. When it works well, it provides for rapid communication from ministry level to rural people.

Disadvantages of the General Agricultural Extension approach

1. It lacks 'two-way communication.'

Communication about 'farmers' problems, needs, and interests tends not to flow up through the extension channels when this approach is used.

National goals and target, fail to adjust the message for each different locality. This will result in trying to encourage farmers to adopt practices which do not 'fit' the types of farming systems, or the current needs of their clientele.

2. Field staffs are not accountable to the rural people. They may ignore the priorities of local people while trying to satisfy supervisory personal.
3. It is expensive and inefficient since messages are inappropriate, the impact is low and cost of personnel is very high.

Advantages of the Commodity Specialized approach

1. The technology tends to 'fit' the production problems and therefore the messages tend to be appropriate.
2. Agricultural extension tends to be efficient and effective since extension activities tend to be coordinated with both input supply and marketing of out put.
3. Better coordination with research and marketing, messages tend to be delivered timely.
4. Focus on narrow range of technical concerns, closer management and supervision, fewer farmers for a given extension worker.
5. Being smaller and more focused, it tends to be easier to monitor, evaluate and relatively more cost effective.

Disadvantages of the Commodity Specialized approach

1. Interest of farmers may have less priority
2. When there is convergence of interest things go well. But when conflicts arise, there are usually difficulties.
3. It does not provide advisory service to other aspects of farming in the case of farmers who produce more than one commodity.

E.g. Soil conservation, food production, livestock production etc....

4. Farmers may be forced with several extension workers from different agencies, with competing advice or demands.
5. Needs and potentials of the whole farm may not be considered.

6. Its narrow focus means that environmental factors may be ignored.
7. Extension objectives are determined by agency needs and priorities not those of farmers.
8. Only minority farmers (with particular type of soil, proximity to processing plants, above average land holding or identified by some criteria) may be potential beneficiaries
9. In areas where governments use marketing boards (to catch both the surplus produce and foreign currency) farmers' incentives could be killed.

Advantages of the Educational Institution Extension Approach

1. It can help the schools in providing real world relevant examples to their academic teaching materials (builds practical into class room)
2. The relationship of scientists to field extension personal is good training for both.
3. Instead of an agricultural extension system having to maintain personnel as part of their own professional staff, they are borrowed from educational institution (more efficient use of human resource).

Disadvantages of the Educational Institution Extension Approach

The tendency for instructors as trainers of field extension staff to speak too academically. Their lecturers and demonstration may not be as practical and useful from a farmer's perspective.

If the agricultural extension system also has its own trained specialized personnel, sometimes there is competition. (i.e. competition which may develop between personnel from ministry of agriculture and personnel of ministry of education).

It is the most common extension approach in the U.S. through land grant universities.

Parts of other countries like India have adopted this approach and have land grant universities that are responsible for applied and adaptive research. These institutions make systematic inputs in to extension, although it continues to be supported by Ministry of Agriculture.

Advantages of the Project Approach

1. It can give quick results
2. Novel techniques and methods can be tested and experimented.

Disadvantages of the Project Approach

1. Time too short
2. Anticipates a flow of the 'good ideas' in the project area to other places.
3. When the supply of money ends, so does the project. i.e. The assumption of continuity seems usually to be unwarranted. Once project termination looms, there is a running down as staff leave and the field unit struggles to become reintegrated into a larger national system.
4. A tendency to consume a large proportion of resources on baseline surveys and the establishment of a temporary logistic base.
5. Staff both local and expatriate tends to become the immediate beneficiaries.
6. Pressures to show immediate results leading to fictitious reporting.
7. Innovations introduced under an external project will be seen by the host government as the outsiders' responsibility and often are quickly abandoned once external funding ceases.

Generally, improvements which do occur are usually short leaved. They depend heavily up on the enthusiasm of a few key individuals. The project could be terminated as the finance and resource supplied outside stops.

Advantages of the Train and Visit (T and V) Extension approach

1. Puts pressure on government to organize a large number of small agricultural extension units into one more integrated service and the pressure it puts on agricultural extension officers to get out of their offices and meet with farmers.
2. Because of regular training, VEWs are assumed to be more up-to-date with information and technology.
3. Field staff receive greater technical supervision.
4. Logistical support to extension staff are more available.

Disadvantages of the Train and Visit (T and V) Extension approach

1. T and V cannot operate effectively in the absence of an effective research program. The system is designed to transfer technology not to create it.

T and V programs have on occasions been established where research institution were inadequate and where sufficient technology base for productive extension .

2. T and V cannot increase production unless the contemporary parts of the small farmer development package like input supply and credit, market mechanisms and price incentives are in place.
3. Local pressure and staff preferences often tend to bias the selection of contact farmers in favor of the richer or more powerful.
4. How much participation?

It is often criticized as top-down and supply driven. Recommendation are not prompted by farmers' expressed needs but by the bureaucratic and academic imperatives

5. The high long term costs to governments.
6. Lack of actual two-way communication.
7. Lack of large supply of simple, low-cost technology which is relevant to farmers.
8. Lack of flexibility to change programs as needs and interests of farming people change from place to place and from time to time.

Advantages of the cost sharing approach

1. Some measures of local control of program planning, which usually accompanies this approach, increase the relevance of the program content and methods to the needs and interests of clientele. This results in higher adoption rates.
2. Local influence on personnel selection, contributes to their ability to communicate effectively, and to win the confidence of rural people.
3. Lower cost to central government.

Disadvantages of the cost sharing approach

1. More difficult for central government to control either program or personnel
2. Reporting financial management, and other aspects of administrative concerns tend to be more complex and difficult.

Advantages of the Participatory approaches in Extension

1. Relevance of the messages, the content of the extension program, and of the methods and communication channels used.
2. Mutually supportive relationship which develops many participants.
3. Increased confidence, awareness, and activity among farm people

Disadvantages of the Participatory approaches in Extension

Difficult to manage, central reporting and accounting