

Unit - 8

IMPLEMENTING PLANS

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Implementing Plan

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8.1 Introduction

"Plan your work and work your plan" is an old axiom but holds still works in this era of science and technology. This means that unless the planning guides the work of extension worker, it has no value. Even finest and sound plans if not put into action can make no difference. So, the work plans must be followed and implemented as designed. Skillful implementation of plans is an art and it occupies central place in extension programme. It is here that teaching learning situation is set up, farmers learn new technology, improve their skills, gain new knowledge and are guided and helped to change their attitude. Hence, implementation of plans in extension programme can rightly be called as the "heart or Core" of extension programme development.

This unit starts with clarifying the concept of implementation. The man behind the implementation is the extension worker who had a definite role to play. Hence, a comprehensive discussion is presented to explore the role of men behind the horse. Programme delivery techniques are also discussed briefly for the guidance of our prospective extension workers.

8.2 Objectives

After studying this unit, students will be able to;

- 1 describe the concept of executing extension plans,
- 2 list 6 tips for acting skillful facilitator,
- 3 create favourable learning environment for the farmers,
- 4 identify and select most appropriate strategy for delivering extension message considering the situation,

8.3 Programme Implementation (MEANINGS)

Let us consult dictionary to find out the literal meanings of the word "implementation". According to Oxford Dictionary (p.408) the term implementation means "put into effect". In the context of extension programme,

this term implies carrying out the activities which has been planned during the planning phase of extension programme development process. It can also be regarded as programme action.

8.4 Extension Worker's role in Implementing Plans

The extension educational process utilizes a wide variety of educational and communication methods. The center of much extension work is the field demonstration where an effort is made to demonstrate both the methods for improving production and the results obtained after recommended practices have been followed. Ideally, farmers are encouraged to form themselves into dialogue groups organized around the trails, to observe and monitor the methods and result demonstrations. It sometimes becomes necessary for extension to provide group leadership training for contact farmers chosen by their peers. Extension may provide supportive communication services which provide timely and useful information for the dialogue group. In this local educational process, it is important that extension staff encourage the emergence of both a scientific attitude and a respect for indigenous knowledge.

For successful execution of plan of work, extension worker has considerable role to play. For successful programme action in extension teaching, an extension worker works with the farmers who have sufficient knowledge, experience and expertise concerning agriculture. Extension worker must help the farmers to realize their hidden potential of their knowledge, expertise and build a sense of confidence in their abilities to control their affairs. But, extension worker should not forget that his/her main job is to help farmers to enable them to be self-reliant (i.e. able to manage their matters on their own). In this particular context of empowering farmers, extension worker must remember that his/her role is that of a facilitator. Hence our extension workers must know what is facilitation and how it can be done skillfully.

8.4.1 Facilitation

Facilitation means managing the way farmers will work together. Extension worker himself must be aware of about the process of facilitation so that he or she can do skillful facilitation. He must take into account that a facilitator:

- Does not make decision(s) for the group of people rather listens carefully and helps them make decisions themselves.
- Knows that the participation of group members is as important as his own.
- Shares his experiences with the local farmers.
- Gives specific and factual feedback and avoids showing personal liking and disliking.

8.4.1.1 Tips for skillful facilitation

Following are some of the tips to be observed by the extension worker for performing the job of facilitation successfully.

- If a discussion is not getting any where, facilitator need to ask leading questions to give it a direction.
- Facilitator needs to manage the discussion rather in getting emotionally involved in the activity.
- Do not take sides.
- Give practical examples as when needed.
- Keep intact with the aim and objectives of the activity.
- Ensure a conducive atmosphere for learning.

8.4.1.2 Qualities of a Facilitator

According to Wlodkowski (1988), a skillful facilitator must possess the following four qualities:

- Expertise

The facilitator knows something useful and how best to convey it. Hence, Extension worker must be competent and has command over the subject matter to

be taught to the farmers. If an extension worker himself does not know or is not clear about an activity, he can not perform that activity skillfully. For example, if activity to be performed is to educate the farmers about sustaining soil fertility. In that case, he must know what does it mean, the soil type in the area, its structure, amount and kind of fertilizer most effective for that soil and the appropriate method of applying fertilizer. If he knows all about, he will be confident and will be in a better position to help, facilitate and guide the farmers to learn and develop this skill for maintaining the soil fertility --essential for getting good yield.

- Empathy

The facilitator understands the learner's needs and can adapt a style that considers the learners' perspective. This means that extension worker comprehends the needs of the farmers. His extension message is based on their needs as identified and prioritized by the farmers.

- Enthusiasm

That facilitator cares about the subject matter and expresses this commitment with emotion and animation.

- Clarity

The facilitator should be a good communicator and knows how to communicate effectively as the situation demands.

8.4.2 Creating Learning Environment

Setting learning stage in group synergy is not that simple as is perceived. Extension worker must provide conducive learning environment for the farmers who are adults and are under no compulsion to learn. Following is a list of points to be considered by the extension worker for creating favourable learning climate.

Farmers learn better when they feel:

- Comfortable

- Respected
- The learning process is highly participatory and interactive
- The new technology is in consistence with heir experience, values and norms of the society.
- Enjoyment in performing the activity
- And know clearly the need to learn latest agri. technology

8.5 Programme Delivery Techniques

As described at the outset of this unit, implementation is the stage in programme development where plans are put into action. An extension worker for successful programme action must have a thorough knowledge and understanding of extension teaching methods best suited for the subject matter and the audience/farmers. Extension teaching methods are the tools in the hands of extension worker to reach the farmers to help them to learn some thing new. He must have a complete understanding and knowledge of extension methods, their applicability, merits and demerits, and should also know which one is best suitable under which conditions. A number of extension methodologies exist which can be used for delivering extension messages depending upon the purpose and type and characteristics of the target farmers. These are described in the following lines:

8.5.1 Individual Approach

It involves the interaction of extension worker with the farmer on one to one basis. Depending upon the complexity of the agricultural innovation, extension worker may decide to contact the farmers on individual basis. In Pakistan, individual farm visit is the most commonly used and widely adopted extension teaching method under the individual approach. It is described as under:

8.5.1.1 Individual Farm Visits

It is particularly suitable for persuading farmers to form a favourable attitude towards new agricultural technology. It involves face to face discussion and provides a chance to the farmers to ask any question (s) and to clarify if he has any doubts or ambiguities by making the use of this method, an extension worker can contact those farmer who do not take part in extension activities and are hesitant to adopt new agri. technology. This method is also useful in getting the first hand information that whether or not the farmers are implementing the technology after they have learnt it.

8.5.2 Group Approach

This approach involves the contact of an extension worker with a group of farmers. The size of the group can vary but it should not be too large where two-way communication between extension worker and the farmers becomes difficult. Group approach is and should be more commonly used for extension work than individual contact. Because, by employing this technique, an extension worker can reach more farmers than is possible by individual approach. This is especially important when time and staff are limiting factors. There are various extension methods such as training meetings, demonstration meetings, tours, group discussions, role playing, workshops, etc. can be employed for reaching a group of farmers. In our country, following are some of the techniques used for delivering the extension messages

8.5.2.1 Training Meetings

In this method, an extension worker or a group of extension workers hold a training meeting for a group of farmers. Now a days in Pakistan, extension authorities are putting special emphasis on extension workers to conduct frequent meetings with farmers for imparting training to them to use latest agri. innovations. This method helps to accelerate communication and interaction.

between the extension personnel and the farmers. As a result of the group synergy through the interaction among the group farmers and the extension worker new and exciting ideas come forward. What an extension worker needs to do is to respond to the changing needs of the farmers as the extension programme progresses.

8.5.2.2 Demonstrations

Laying out demonstration plot(s)/ centers and organizing farmers meeting at the location is a very popular technique being used by the extension personnel in Pakistan. In this method, a selected agri. technology is demonstrated at farmers field where extension worker show a group of farmers the results of that technology or explains how to perform an operation concerning that technology. It is based on the notion of seeing is believing. This method is particularly suited for implementing extension plans in our conditions as majority of our farming community is illiterate or has limited education.

8.5.2.3 Tours

In this technique, an extension worker organizes a tour for a group of farmers. A group of farmer travels with the extension worker to another location (experimental station, farm of another farmer, etc.) to observe agricultural practices which are not available locally. It is useful to provide the farmers with first-hand information. It provides an opportunity to the farmers to interact and exchange their views with the person whose farm is being visited. It can be very effective and informatory if organized properly. Extension worker needs to make it clear to the farmers beforehand the purpose of the tour, what they are going to see. Explain it to the farmers how it is important and valuable for them. At the end, a discussion session may be arranged.

8.5.3 Mass Approach

This method involves contacting substantial number of farmers simultaneously. Mass approach is particularly suited when the objective is to create awareness among the farming community concerning agri. technology. The use of mass media for this purpose is one of the best methods to inform farmers in limited time.

In conclusion, considering the situation in Pakistan, it is recommended to make the use of variety of methods in combination for implementing extension plans. For example, if lecture method is supplemented with written material will reinforce its teaching value. Because it provides an opportunity to the farmer to read it at his home and keep it for future reference. But printed matter has limited applicability in a country like Pakistan where literacy rate is quite low and especially in farming community this figure is quite high. In this situation, the result demonstration might be the best choice where farmers can see with their own eyes and learn better.

8.6 Activities

Situation

Suppose, you are working as an Extension Officer in the Department of Agriculture (Ext.) and are assigned the responsibility to uplift the living standard of the farmers living in the area of your jurisdiction. For this purpose, you have already designed a comprehensive extension education programme. Keeping in view the situation, perform the following activities:

1. Describe the strategy to be used for ensuring maximum participation of farmers for the implementation of your plan of work

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2. Identify at least 4 strengths of the activity performed above as 1.

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3. Identify at least 4 weaknesses of the activity performed above as 1.

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8.7 Self-Assessment Exercises

Q. No. 1 What is meant by the term implementation in the context of extension programme .

Q. No. 2 Discuss the role of extension worker as facilitator in the implementation of extension programme

Q. No. 3. Enlist various strategies for delivering extension message. Describe any two of them.

