

Chapter 7

Appropriate Extension Methodologies for Agricultural Development in Emerging Economies

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ABSTRACT

Over two-thirds of the world's poorest people are located in rural areas and engaged primarily in agriculture and agricultural-related activities for their livelihood. Therefore, the future of most underdeveloped and developing nations depends on agriculture. Most African Countries have agricultural dependent economies that are hinged to rain-fed agriculture and based on smallholdings. These countries are referred to as countries with emerging economies and characterized as having low to middle per capita income and represent 20% of the world's economies. This chapter discusses; concepts of agricultural extension methodologies assessed from past to present, appropriating extension methodologies to encourage agricultural development, identifying roles of agricultural extension activities in agricultural development and factors influencing the choice of appropriate extension methodologies in emerging economies. It concludes with the constraints to sustainable agricultural development and extension methodologies which if removed will have the potential for progression towards economy development. Developing countries should fashion a sustainable extension system that will be socially acceptable and culturally compatible, economically viable and environmentally friendly.

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INTRODUCTION

More than two-thirds of the poorest of the poor populations of the world are located in rural areas and derive their livelihood from the rural environment. More than 70% of such people in developing nations are engaged in agriculture and agricultural-related activities. Therefore, the future of most underdeveloped and developing nations depends on agriculture. Most African nations have agricultural dependent economies that are hinged to rain-fed agriculture and based on smallholdings. The smallholders depend mostly on traditional tools which, though easily maintained, are energy sapping and make agricultural production laborious. Many of the innovations that are developed by researchers, especially in the universities and research institutes, are wasting away on their shelves. Agricultural Extension agencies that are tasked with disseminating the developed innovations, are either moribund, the innovations/technologies have not been transferred to them or innovations are inappropriate. In some instances, scientists are not ready to release their innovations because they think that the extension agencies that disseminate the innovation to farmers will take their glory. All of these contribute to continued poverty among farmers.

Extension is a service or system which assists farm people, through educational procedures, in improving farming methods and techniques, increasing production efficiency and income, bettering their levels of living and lifting the social and educational standards of rural life (Maunder, 1973). Agricultural extension can be defined simply as the transfer of useful information from a source to the farmers or rural dwellers. Swanson et al. (1997) defined agricultural extension as the extending of relevant agricultural information to people. Piercell and Anderson (1997) defined agricultural extension as a process of assisting farmers to be aware and adopt improved technology from reliable sources to enhance production efficiency, income, and welfare of farmers. The main goal of agricultural extension is to improve the socio – economic condition of farmers and rural dwellers. As a discipline, it finds itself articulating appropriate knowledge and decision-making capacity to determine how factors of production can be best utilized to improve the standard of living of rural dwellers through appropriate extension methodologies (Famuyiwa, 2013).

The general objectives of extension are to:

1. Assist farmers to discover and analyze their problems and identify their felt needs.
2. Develop leadership among farmers and help them in organizing groups to solve their problems.
3. Disseminate research information of economic and practical importance in a way farmers would be able to understand and use.
4. Assist farmers in mobilizing and utilizing the resources which they have and to identify what they need from outside.
5. Collect and transmit feedback information for solving management problems.

Agricultural extension, therefore, provides the indispensable elements that farmers need to improve their agricultural activities. This has made agricultural extension to be a crucial input in agricultural development, especially in Nigeria.

Most developing nations of the world especially in Africa have implemented various agricultural extension methodologies. Most of the methodologies are transferred from a country where it has been successfully implemented, to other countries regardless of the farming system and culture of the country. In addition, some funding agencies also sponsor and fund agricultural extension methodologies in developing countries. As soon as the funding ceases, the project also ceases. A good example is Agricultural

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