

THE NATURE OF THE AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Communication process is the process of transmission and reception of information through talk, written material or other medium. In communication, something triggers off the thinking process of the originator of the communication (information, message, suggestion, knowledge, etc). This originator (source) then decides on how he/she will pass on the thought in his/her mind to another individual. He decides the words (spoken or written), gestures, actions, etc that he will use in conveying the message. He even decides how the message will get to the receiver. When the receiver gets the message, a series of thought springs up in his/her mind. This leads to a response. When the response gets to the former source (who is now a receiver), another series of thought springs up and the process continues. The cycle goes on and on as a continuous process with an intrinsically built self propelling inertia. The non static aspects of communication process are the thought, attitudes, behaviour, relaxations and emotions.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

A lot of barriers, problems and obstacles exist in the process of communication. The problems are identified as follows:

Feed Forward

- (i) Homophily/Heterophily Principle
- (ii) Selectivity
- (iii) Cognitive dissonance
- (iv) Noise
- (v) Empathy
- (vi) Wanning Attention
- (vii) Information Overload
- (viii) Credibility
- (ix) Shortage of physical and material inputs

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION AND AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

Course content: Concept of development, communication and audience; communication media, communication methods, extension teaching aids, audience analysis, script writing and editing.

Aim: This section aims at imparting the knowledge of communication principles in educating farmers on agricultural technology applications, improved farm productivity and marketing of farm produce competitively. At end of the lesson the students are expected to be able to understand and make use of different communication media under varying circumstances to reach out to their targeted audience, who must be well understood for the purpose of meeting their needs

Development communication

Development, from a sociological point of view implies empowering members of a social system such that they are able to explore their environment for their socioeconomic wellbeing. It entails having access to functional infrastructural facilities and technical information for manipulation of the environment to satisfy their social and economic well being.

Communication on the other is essential to attainment of economic and social development of a social system. That is, through effective means of communication, useful technical information can be readily communicated to end users for application and transformation of their social and economic well being.

Since extension service has the goal of transforming the socioeconomic well being of their clients and their social system at large, it thus rely heavily on technical information and communication media to achieve the aim of development efforts.

Communication media in extension services

Communication media refers to the means by which information is disseminated to extension clients. This may be by prints, spoken word, and signs and symbols.

- **Prints:** This implies putting extension messages in written form. This could be text on papers, handbills, educational board, fliers etc. This is meant to give comprehensive information on a subject matter which can be read over time by the would-be users.

- **Spoken words:** This entails oral message delivery by extension personnel to extension clients. This entails delivering the message in clear form such that the clients understand the message for application. This calls for use of the language best understood by the extension clients.

- **Signs and symbols:** This entails making use of signals or indicators for dissemination of information to ones client. This is usually devoid of spoken and written words. For understanding the packaged signs and symbols, it implies that what is traditionally understood by members of the social the system must be used by the extension personnel. The extension personnel must however understand the signs and symbols as understood by members of the social system so as to avoid conflicts of meaning.

Channels of communication

A channel of communication refers to the means by which packaged information can be disseminated to the clients. Example of communication channels are television, radio, person to person, paper etc.

- **Radio broadcast:** This entails communication of extension messages through the radio. This makes use of sound mainly.

- **Television broadcast:** This entails the dissemination of extension messages via the television. This makes use of sound and pictures.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT): This refers to any electronic device that facilitates the collection, processing, storage, retrieval, flow and exchange of information between a source and the receiver.

This makes it possible for quick exchange of information and feedback or interaction in TV and radio broadcast.

Audience Analysis

Extension audience refers to a set of people targeted for extension message delivery. This may be men's club, women groups, youth associations etc. Extension audience is however made up of different categories of people and this may be in terms age group, sex, occupation - crop, livestock and agro-processing, educational background etc.

In view of the differences in members of a social system or groups, it implies that make up of a group differs in composition and such calls for analysis of the audience for effective packaging of agricultural extension messages.

Therefore group analysis can be done through the following methods:

- **Observation:** This entails taken a careful and critical look at the members of a group so as to know and understand their make-up and what they do as means of livelihood. This calls for living with community for sometimes and interacting with the members
- **Discussion:** This can be done either by having meaningful and in-depth discussion on specific purpose with a key informant, informal groups or formal groups in a social system
- **Survey:** This is a scientific approach to studying and analysing the make-up of a group. This could be conducted by employing sampling techniques such as random, systematic, quota, purposive sampling. Thereafter, data collecting and analysis, based on which conclusion will be drawn.
- **Rapid Rural Appraisal:** This entails interaction with the audience for quick data collection or information generation about the make-up of the group.

News Writing and Editing

News refers to newly generated information that will be of value to the audience. Such information either stimulates the audience to action or have them informed on the issue of concern.

Writing implies scripting or putting a piece of information down in writing. Writing style may however take different forms. It could be in narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive, argumentative forms. The employed style of writing depends on purpose or what one wants to accomplish.

Editing simply refers to taking a careful look at a write-up with a view to ensuring that errors are corrected for clarity.

Agricultural programmes

Broadcast programmes entail different dimension or ways by which agricultural activities can be packaged and presented in both print and electronic media. Programmes may the form of talks, magazines, documentary, features etc