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A study on extent of suitability of extension teaching methods in relation to learning styles of farmers of Telangana state

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Abstract

Most of the technologies transferred by the extension personnel to the farmer is of top to bottom approach rather than bottom-up approach. Unless the farmer learns how to adopt a new technology he is not motivated to adopt it. Hence greater importance has to be given to the learning preferences of the farmer there by matching it with the suitable extension teaching methods as expressed by farmers that would enable appropriate and suitable selection of extension teaching methods for continuous and effective learning. A sample of 120 farmers were taken as respondents for the study from two districts i.e (Nalgonda and Mahaboobnagar) of Telangana state. Thirty extension personnel working in two districts in the study area from the department of agriculture and allied sectors i.e A.O's, A.E.O's, H.O's, H.E.O's, V.A.S's were included to study the "Extent of use of extension teaching methods by the extension personnel". The survey results showed that less than majority 41.66 percent of the respondents had medium level of suitability towards extension teaching methods followed by low, very low, high, very high level of suitability towards extension teaching methods in relation to learning styles of farmers. Where most of the extension teaching methods used by the extension personnel were based on their convenience rather than learner centered and thus extension teaching methods used were not in accordance with farmers style of learning.

Keywords: Extension teaching, relation, learning

Introduction

The technology transfer is actually a structural process of learning. Although the transfer of technology in agriculture has helped in raising farm production, productivity and income of farmers leading to significant progress in the area of agricultural development in developing countries like India. Farmers do not fully adopt the technologies recommended by the extension personnel even though the Indian extension system had played its role untiringly in transfer of agricultural technology since many reasons. Where one of the reasons could be inability of the farmer to learn. According to Honey and Mumford (1992) [3] in his study suggests that learning preferences should be measured as this will provide an opportunity to match an individual's learning style preferences to learning activity to improve learning outcomes and to modify the preferred learning style as each individual has their own preference of learning stimulus and improper use of extension teaching methods by extension personnel. Strong *et al.* (2010) [7] addressed that Extension agents should reflect upon the teaching strategies they employ and evaluate those most effective for their adult audiences based on their learning style preferences. Where most of the teaching strategies used by the extension personnel may be teaching centered rather than learner centered. According to Sarasin (1999) [6] "teaching cannot be successful without a knowledge of learning styles and a commitment to matching them with teaching styles and strategies". Unless the extension teaching methods used by the extension personnel does not relate with that of learning styles of the farmers there might be an hindrance in adoption of agricultural technology by the farmers. Extension personnel as a change agent need to know and adopt different extension teaching methods based on the preferred learning styles of the farmer. Hence extension educationalists need to focus on their method of teaching by deploying suitable extension teaching methods based on the individual differences in learning styles as one style does not fit for every individual.

Materials & Methods

A schedule was developed consisting of different extension teaching methods listed to measure the extent of suitability of extension teaching methods as expressed by farmers.

The response for each extension teaching method was measured on three point continuum i.e., Highly suitable, Moderately suitable and Not suitable with weightages 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Based on the maximum and minimum obtained scores 52 and 22 respectively, the respondents were classified in to five categories based on exclusive class interval technique. The results were expressed in frequencies and percentages. The scores obtained against extension teaching methods were summed up and the total scores was obtained. From the total scores mean score were calculated. Based on the mean score of each extension teaching method they were rank ordered and results were presented accordingly.

Results and Discussion

The findings regarding extent of suitability of extension teaching methods in relation to learning styles of farmers. It was evident from the Table 1 and Figure 1 indicate that less than majority (41.66%) of the respondents fall under medium level of extent of suitability towards extension teaching methods followed by (30.00%) under low category, (14.17%) very low, (10.00%) high, (4.17%) very high level of extent of suitability of extension teaching methods in relation to learning styles of farmers.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents based on the extent of suitability of extension teaching methods in relation to learning styles of farmers (N=120)

S. No	Category	Class Interval	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Very Low Level of suitability of extension teaching methods	22 - 28	17	14.17
2.	Low level of suitability of extension teaching methods	28 - 34	36	30.00
3.	Medium level of suitability of extension teaching methods	34 - 40	50	41.66
4.	High level of suitability of extension teaching methods	40 - 46	12	10.00
5.	Very high level of suitability of extension teaching methods	46 - 52	5	4.17
Total			120	100.00

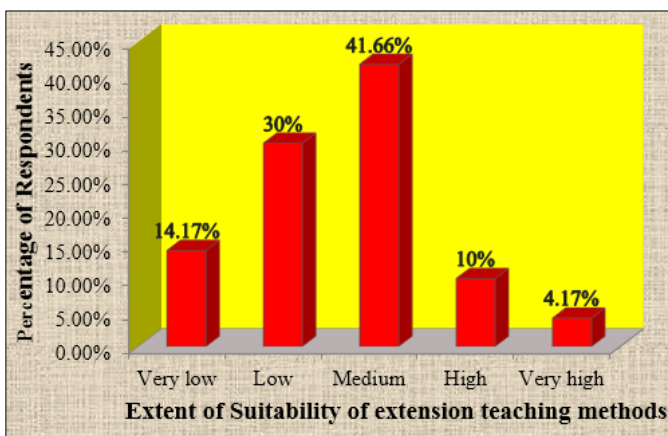


Fig 1. Distribution of respondents based on the extent of suitability of extension teaching methods N= 120

It can be observed from the Table. 1, that most of the respondents fall under medium level of extent of suitability of extension teaching methods in relation to their learning styles

followed by low, very low, high and very high. The above trend might be due to medium level of use of extension teaching methods by the extension personnel, extension teaching methods used by the extension personnel may not suit to the learning situation of the farmer i.e., use of improper extension teaching methods, delivery of information by the extension personnel using inappropriate communication tools. Most of the extension teaching methods used may be based on their convenience rather than learner centered and thus extension teaching methods used may not be in-accordance with farmers style of learning. As the farmers preferred few extension contact methods viz., namely under individual contact methods mostly Farm & Home visits, Result demonstrations under Group contact methods Field trips, Method demonstrations and under mass contact methods Television, ICT based tools, Print media only. Hence this might be the reason for medium level of extent of suitability of extension teaching methods in relation to their learning styles of farmers.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents based on the Rank ordering of suitability of extension teaching methods as expressed by farmers N=120)

S. NO.	Extension Teaching Methods	Not Suitable (1)		Moderately Suitable (2)		Highly Suitable (3)		Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
		F	%	F	%	F	%			
I Individual contact methods										
1.	Farm & Home visit	10	8.33	30	25.00	80	66.66	310	2.58	II
2.	Office calls	30	25.00	30	25.00	60	50.00	270	2.25	IX
3.	Personal letters/Circular letters	90	75.00	20	16.66	10	8.33	160	1.33	XV
4.	Result demonstration	10	8.33	35	29.16	75	62.50	305	2.54	IV
5.	Adaptive/Minikit trails	15	12.5	40	33.33	65	54.16	290	2.41	VII
II Group contact methods										
1.	Method demonstration	8	6.66	35	29.16	77	64.16	309	2.57	III
2.	Group meetings	20	16.66	70	58.33	30	25.00	250	2.08	XII
3.	Lecture method	25	20.83	75	62.50	20	16.66	235	1.95	XIII
4.	Group discussion	25	20.83	50	41.66	45	37.50	260	2.16	XI
5.	Field trips	5	4.16	40	33.33	75	62.50	310	2.58	II
6.	Farm Field Schools	25	20.83	45	37.50	50	41.66	265	2.20	X
7.	Conferences/Seminars	50	41.66	30	25.00	40	33.33	230	1.91	XIV
III Mass contact methods										
1.	Radio	10	8.33	50	41.66	60	50.00	290	2.41	VII
2.	Television	2	1.66	38	31.66	80	66.66	318	2.65	I
3.	Campaign	10	8.33	60	50.00	50	41.66	280	2.33	VIII
4.	Exhibitions/Kisan melas	10	8.33	40	33.33	70	58.33	300	2.50	V
5.	Print media	5	4.16	50	41.66	65	54.16	300	2.50	V
6.	Non projected low cost visual aids & specimens	12	10.00	40	33.33	68	56.66	296	2.46	VI
7.	ICT based tools	5	4.16	45	37.50	70	58.33	305	2.54	IV

It was inferred from the Table. 4.18 that most of the respondents expressed Television as their 1st preference, followed by Farm & Home visit, Field trips as their 2nd preference, Method demonstration as their 3rd preference, Result demonstration, ICT based tools as their 4th preference, Exhibitions/Kisan melas, Print media were expressed as 5th preference. The probable reasons for most of the respondents in the study area preferring Television as their 1st preference might be due to the fact that now a days the programmes broadcasted in the Television are interactive like phone in live programmes, interviews which are timely, broadcasted according to the convenient time of farmers. It was followed by Farm & Home visits the reason might be due to the fact that their problems can be addressed and they can clarify their doubts immediately. Farmers preferred Field trips as they can get first-hand knowledge regarding improved practices in natural setting adopted by successful farmers. Method demonstrations and Result demonstrations were preferred due to the present study which revealed that majority of the respondents were under Pragmatist/Converger learning style where they prefer practical way of learning, tend to try new innovations only when they are applicable in their realistic field situations. Due to their medium to high mass media exposure, high participation in extension activities they prefer visiting Exhibitions/Kisan melas to get factual information on agriculture. Print media was preferred by the farmers due to their high school level of education and medium to high access to learning resources. Hence these might be the reasons for the above trend.

This is in confirmation with the findings of Reisenberg (1989), Creswell and Martin (1993) ^[1], Richardson (1994) ^[4], Farhadian (1998).

Conclusion

Hence it was also revealed that more than one extension teaching methods was expressed as suitable by most of the respondents in relation to their learning styles in the study as no single learning style would yield better result by the respondents for their effective learning in the similar way no single extension teaching method is appropriate there must be a combination of extension teaching methods relevant to the learning situation of the farmers

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