



Market-LED Extension: A new role of Agricultural Extension

Soumya Sakti Dash¹, Aditya Prasad Kanungo² and Rajeeb Kumar Behera³

^{1,2 & 3}Department of Agricultural Extension & Communication, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, SOADU, Bhubaneswar

Introduction

Market-LED agricultural extension aims at improving the efficiency of the farmers in an effort not only to rapidly increase the rate of agricultural production but to improve the qualities of agricultural production to compete in the national and international market. During the last 60 years emphasis was given on production LED extension (PLE) in our country to boost agricultural production of food grains but the marketing of the farm produce to fetch remunerative price to farmers and to prevent distress sale of farm produce no emphasis was given by the agricultural field functionaries. Many of our farmers use traditional methods and follow the old established pattern of farming that is seed to seed farming. But we need concept of agricultural marketing is money to money that is money invest and money returns as profit from agricultural produce. The crops to be grown only to earn as much profit as possible therefore, the present-day agriculture is considered as professional industry and enterprise and to make our farmers as agricultural entrepreneurs.

After globalization of the market, farmers need to transform themselves from Mere producers-sellers in the domestic market to producers cum sellers in a wide market sense to best realise their returns on the investments, risks and efforts for linking the farmers produce with market. The farmers need to know the answer to questions such as what to produce? When to produce? How much to produce? When to sale? Where to sale? With what price to sale? and in what form to sale? Today the farming community receives most of the modern farm technologies from the extension system now time has come the entire extension system needs to be reorganised, oriented with knowledge and skills related to market Besides that to accomplish efficient marketing, the infrastructure like information and extension services to farmers, transportation and communication facilities including marketing Intelligence Service, public utility supply (like water and electricity), trade and advertisement, public storage, market and abattoir facilities are very much required. Under the new face of marketing the present extension system should undergo a series of crisis that is knowledge skill input crisis, efficacy crisis, credibility crisis and reorganisation structure crisis of the present extension system

Challenges of Market-led Extension (MLE)

- Reorientation of the present extension system and capacity building of the extension functionaries
- Rapid changes in the information technology through use of modern ICT for making the farmers info-rich
- Regular generation of data on market Intelligence and dissemination
- Extension cadre development for better functioning from production led extension to market led extension
- reorganization of the public extension system for providing better services to farmers

Roles of Agricultural extension personnel in the light of market-led extension (MLE)

When we link the production Led Extension to market-led extension theories of Agricultural extension personnel may be enhanced by:

- Doing the SWOC analysis (strength, weakness, opportunity and challenges) for planning of farmers production and marketing
- Organisation of farmers interest groups (FIGs) on commodity approval basis and building their capabilities with regard to management of their farm enterprise
- Supporting and enhancing the capacities of locally established groups under various schemes and programmes
- Enhancing the interactive and communication skills of the farmers to exchange their views with customers and other market forces (particularly middleman involvement) for getting feedback and gain bargaining skills during direct marketing of the farm produce
- Establishing marketing and Agro processing linkages between farmers interest groups (FIGs), market and private processors
- Providing regular advice or information to the farmers on product planning as per market demands in terms of selection of Crops, suitable varieties basing on land and Agro climatic conditions and marketability of the farm produce
- Motivating and educating the farming community to treat agriculture as an entrepreneurial activity and accordingly plan various phases of crop production and marketing.



- Farmers are needed to be informed about the benefit of direct marketing to earn better remunerative prices for their products
- Capacity building and the FIGs in terms of improved production Technologies, post- harvest management practices, storage, transport and marketing
- Providing regular market information and weather forecast to farmers to use of different medias and ICTs

Conclusion

The Market led extension and the new roles of the extension personnel can establish its position by helping the farmer to realise high returns for their produce, minimise the production cost, improving the product value and marketability.

The flow chart of MLE depicted as follows where agriculture is perceived as an Enterprise. Rupee credit /investment → what to produce → analysis of land and Agro climatic structures for selective of crop/ Enterprises → decision on how much to produce in how much land to each crop or enterprise → how to produce → when to produce → post-harvest management practices → value addition → storage / transportation → when to sell → where to sell → at what price to sell → selling → Rupee income in shape of profit.

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