



**MANAGE-TNAU**  
**Collaborative Training Programme on**  
**Extension Plus: Expanding the roles of Extension**  
**18-22 July 2016**  
**Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore**



MANAGE and TNAU jointly organized a training programme on *Extension Plus: Expanding the roles of Extension* held at TNAU from 18-22 July 2016. Aparna Radhakrishnan participated in this training and she shares her experiences here.

**THE CONTEXT**

“Extension-plus” is a framework for investment in strengthening and reforming extension. The aim of the framework is to be a strong partner and nodal agency with a broad scope of service provision (beyond technology transfer) providing technological and non technological services to farmers. The larger goal of investments in Extension-plus is to strengthen the capacity of extension and advisory services by a learning-based approach. The National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) jointly organized a training programme on “Extension Plus: Expanding the Roles of Extension” held at TNAU, Coimbatore, from 18-22 July 2016. Twenty-Four participants across the country representing different professional (extension, teaching, research, etc) fields and disciplines participated in the six-day programme.



## THE PROGRAMME

The programme started with brief remarks by Dr R. Saravanan, Director (Agricultural Extension), MANAGE. He outlined the objectives of the training and the training methodology. He highlighted the importance of experimentation, learning, and adaptation to local circumstances to develop and promote extension-plus approaches. This 5-day training programme used several approaches (discussed below) to help participants appreciate and understand the different types of extension-plus approaches.

### *Presentation by experts*

Dr Saravanan (MANAGE) provided the theoretical basis and the compelling reasons for embracing Extension Plus approaches which provide a much broader range of services and support to rural producers. He also talked about how social media is currently narrowing the extension gap and presented innovative examples of social media use that is linking several actors in the Agricultural Innovation System.



Dr R M Prasad, Independent Consultant and former Professor (Agricultural Extension), Kerala Agricultural University, highlighted the importance of convergence and the nature of governance challenges and shared his experiences on how these are addressed in different programmes. Dr P S Geethakutty, Professor (Agricultural Extension), Kerala Agricultural University, in her

address talked about gender responsive extension and how some of the programmes are organising rural women to successfully engage in value addition, marketing, provision of insurance and technology development appropriate for women.

Mr R. Inigo Arul Selvan, Manager, NABARD, highlighted the importance of capital, subsidy, credit and scale of finance in agricultural development.



Extension workers also need to know the details of the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme. He stressed on Joint Liability Groups (JLG) - an informal group consisting of minimum four to maximum 10 individual members coming together for the purpose of availing bank loan through group mechanism against mutual guarantee. Ware house development regulatory act is a milestone for farmers and he shared his rich experience of working with the farmers and articulated many practical issues related to banking and agriculture.



Mr Thachinamurthy Krishnan – CEO, IAPCL (Illuppur Agriculture Producer Company Ltd) - introduced the concept of Producer Company. He talked about how IAPCL evolved and how it enhanced the livelihood of poor, small and marginal women and men producers. Different interventions in sustainable production, value addition and collective marketing helped in

enhancing the livelihood. Since April 2015, the Tamil Nadu Small Farmers Agri-business Consortium (TNSFAC) is supporting IAPCL to formalize its activities.

Dr S. Rajalakshmi, Avinasilingam University, Coimbatore presented on Corporate Social Responsibility. She explained how the NGOs and private organisations are solving various social issues; providing social empowerment and ensuring social justice to the downtrodden, weaker section and underprivileged community. She used cases from SEWA, Mahindra Education Trust, Reliance, GVK Airport foundation, Wipro, Hindustan Petroleum, Akshaya patra, Manasi etc.



I presented a lecture on how and why extension should address climate change and the need for having innovative strategies to mitigate, cope up, and adapt with variability and risks arising from climate change. There is an urgent need to explore, conceptualise and change agricultural extension practices in accordance with the changing climate by enhancing and combining sectoral adaptive capacities.

Mr. Sivalingam, a progressive farmer from Dharmapuri presented his experience on forming a millet producers FPO (Farmer Producer Organisation) with the support of KVK (Krishi Vigyan Kendra), Paparapatty and scientific advice from Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU). This FPO has 57 groups with 1021 farmers with 35% women. Through FPO intervention, the farmers could achieve substantial increase in profit (from Rs 15,000 to Rs 50,000/acre). With the support of

UAS, Bangalore and Department of Agri-Business Development, he is about to market his produce under brand name D-Millet.

Mr. Ajeethan, General Secretary, Tamil Nadu Banana Growers Association, Namakkal, shared his experience on Banana value addition and how the FPO is supporting farmers with value addition and marketing of banana.



### *Exposure visits*

The participants visited the India International Coir Fair (IICF) 2016 & Agri Intex 2016 that were held



from 15-18 July at Codissia Trade Fair Complex, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, with more than 400 exhibitors participating in the event. The participants also visited the organic farm of Mr. Sundaramaiyar Sathyamangalam who is a leader of Vellingiri Uzhavan Maiyam and Tamil Nadu Farmers Technology Association. Mr Sundaramaiyar has adopted several innovative organic farm practices in his field.

During our visit to the KVK managed by MYRADA, Dr P Alagesan, Programme Coordinator, KVK, briefed the participants about the Self Help Affinity Group (SHAG), Community Managed Resource Centre (CMRC), Erode District Organic Farmers Federation (EDOFF), Watershed Development Association (WDA) and Farmers Club that functions with the support of KVK. The KVK has promoted several innovations in the area of Integrated Farm Development, Livestock Management, Farmer Field School, Internet Kiosks and promotion of aromatic plant cultivation.



We also visited the Community Managed Resource Center (CMRC)- a federation of SHGs formed in a cluster by the KVK. One CMRC in MYRADA covers a specific area and around 120 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) – who apply to join the CMRC as members. However, a CBO cannot automatically join as a member just because it happens to exist in the area

covered by the CMRC. It has to reach a certain standard of performance and maturity, which is assessed by the CMRC Board. CMRC has 100-120 CBOs. SHG, JLG, FPO and finally FPCs are formed. All the services are charged and CMRCs provide an excellent platform linking all stakeholders. CMRC promotes CBOs, organise technical training, field visits, conducts medical camps, arranges bank linkage, promotes JLG and FC, creates awareness on health, education etc.

During our visit to the E-extension centre TNAU, Dr. C. Karthikeyan, Professor (Agrl.Extn.) TNAU, narrated on the functions of the centre and how the TNAU agritech portal provides A-Z information on agriculture and allied subjects in bilingual languages. The portal links all the developmental departments under one platform. Multi-Video Conference Facility connecting 59 Centers of TNAU is another e-extension initiative of the centre. He also explained on other components like expert system for agriculture and animal husbandry, dynamic market information: price information for perishable commodities, technologies towards an interactive mobile multimedia based agro advisory system and Tamil Nadu agricultural weather network.

The participants analysed all these different experiences from the lectures and case studies to understand extension-plus approaches. The analysis covered the different dimensions such as the new actors in extension landscape, the new roles being played by the old and new actors (innovator, instructor, change agent, facilitator, broker, problem solver etc), the nature of partnerships being formed and how institutions and policies support the development of new functions and promotion of Extension Plus approaches.

#### *Experience sharing by trainees*

One of the trainees Dr. Chinnam Naidu, KVK Head, Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh, gave an interesting talk about KVK Amadalavalasa. The KVK has many unique achievements like Mass Trapping of Shoot and Fruit Borer in Brinjal using Pheromone Traps, Marigold and Cabbage cultivation, Ground nut varieties, Bio control of blast and sheath blight in paddy and silage bags for feed management in cattle. Dr D S Bhatti, Associate Director Extension Education, PAU also gave an insightful presentation on the extension activities of PAU, Ludhiana. Dr R Thirumavalavan, TANUVAS, Villupuram gave shared his institutional level experiences on Animal Husbandry and Veterinary practices. Mr J Ravindra, Agriculture Officer from Coimbatore shared the field level experiences in Coimbatore and futuristic vision for the farmers. Mr Suryakant Vishnu Patel, Agriculture Officer from Maharashtra is an excellent farmer. He presented the videos of his efforts to bring irrigation water to the drought affected parts of Maharashtra. He was also nominated for PMs Award for his innovative approaches.

#### *Valedictory*

Dr K Ramasamy, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and Dr H Phillip, Director of Extension Education, TNAU participated as Chief Guest in the valedictory function. Both briefed the trainees on the new research findings and the innovative



extension approaches being piloted by TNAU.

## MY IMPRESSIONS

The meeting started with an ice-breaking session and understanding expectations of the participants (through a card exercise). These were used as a guide in planning the subsequent sessions.

While the expert lectures covered different dimensions of Extension Plus, the exposure visit was the predominant learning approach used in this training. The emphasis was on learning from the field, listening to the practitioners and analysing and learning from there through card exercises, group exercises and plenary presentations.

The trainees representing various functionaries from the departments of agriculture and horticulture, KVK and universities, were given the opportunity to participate and share their experiences in the programme. Despite holding positions at different levels in the organisational hierarchy, the trainees interacted cordially, with no age and language barriers.

TNAU provided an excellent opportunity for the participants to study the field situations and the university provided many facilities like boarding, transport and manpower.

## FINAL REMARKS

The five-day training programme helped the participants to better appreciate the need for expanding the mandate (beyond transfer or technology) and functions of extension and also to learn from experiences where the broader approaches have been tried.

Quoting Mr J Ravindra, Agricultural Officer, Coimbatore, *“The training really motivated us and provided an excellent opportunity for various extension functionaries to interact and learn from each other. Extension Plus should be the approach for addressing the current challenges in agriculture”*.

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