

EXTENSION PROGRAMME PLANNING

To understand the extension programme planning process, certain basic concepts of an extension programme, planning and extension planning need to be understood.

Extension programme

The word 'programme' has several distinct meanings in the dictionary. It means a proclamation, a prospectus, a list of events, a plan of procedure, a course of action prepared or announced before hand, a logical sequence of operations to be performed in solving a problem. When used by an organization, it means a prospectus or a statement issued to promote understanding and interest in an enterprise.

According to Kelsey and Hearne (1949), an "extension programme" is a statement of situation, objectives, problems and solutions'.

According to the USDA (1956), an "extension programme" is arrived at co-operatively by the local people and the extension staff and includes a statement of:

1. The situation in which the people are located;
2. The problems that are a part of the local situation;
3. The objectives and goals of the local people in relation to these problems; and
4. The recommendations or solutions to reach these objectives on a long-time basis (may be several years) or on a short-time basis (may be one year or less).

Leagans (1961) says that an "extension programme" is a set of clearly defined, consciously conceived objectives or ends, derived from an adequate analysis of the situation, which are to be achieved through extension teaching activity'.

Lawrence (1962) says that an "extension programme" is the sum total of all the activities and undertakings of a county extension services. It includes: (i) programme planning process; (ii) written programme statement; (iii) plan of work; (iv) programme execution; (v) results; and (vi) evaluation.

- ❖ From the above definitions, it is clear that an extension programme:
- ❖ Is a written statement;
- ❖ Is the end product of extension programme planning;
- ❖ Includes a statement of situation, objectives, problems and solutions;
- ❖ Is relatively permanent but requires constant revision;
- ❖ May include long-term as well as short-term programme objectives;
- ❖ Forms the basis of extension teaching plans;
- ❖ Has been drawn up in advance; and
- ❖ Has been built on the basis of content.

So, we can define an **extension programme** as a written statement of situation, objectives, problems and solutions which has been prepared on the basis of an adequate and systematic planning effort and which forms the basis of extension teaching activities in a specific area, for a given period.

Definitions for a set of important terminologies in this regard would provide the needed clarity:

Programme is a written statement containing a more pertinent factual data used in decision-making, the problems agreed upon with priority assignment and the possible solutions to the problems'.

Plan or Plan of work is an outline of activities so arranged as to enable efficient execution of the entire programme. It answers the questions of what, why, how, when, where and by whom the work is to be done.

Project is a single item of the annual plant containing the method of solution of a single selected problem

Calendar of work is a plan of work arranged chronologically, according to the time when step of work is to be done. It is a time schedule of work.

Aim is a broad objective. It is a generalised statement of direction and may have several objectives. It is also said to be an end in view to give direction to the creative process.

Objective is a direction of movement. A well stated objective is always measurable. It is also said to be a goal of growth.

Goal is a distance in any given direction, proposed to be covered in a given time.

Planning

The basic concept of planing appears to be well accepted in our culture. It is regarded as an integral and important dimension of our culture's rational value orientation. Rational value orientation assumes a conscious systematic approach to problem solving, i.e., problem definition, data gathering and choosing between alternative ends and means on the basis of predetermined criteria. Almost everyone accepts the premise that planning is important and necessary for individuals, for families and for business organizations. The most effective planning effort would be that 'which achieves the greatest degree of performance of the actions, motions or operations implied by a set of planning concepts which depict the ideal process (Boyle, 1965).

Assumptions on Extension Planning

The concept of extension planning is based on a number of assumptions. Boyle (1965) has listed the following assumptions in this regard:

1. Planning change is a necessary prerequisite to effective social progress for people and communities.
2. The most desirable change is predetermined and democratically achieved.
3. Extension education programmes, if properly planned and implemented, can make a significant contribution to planned change.
4. It is possible to select, organize and administer a programme that will contribute to the social and economic progress of people.
5. People and communities need the guidance, leadership and help of extension educators to solve their problems in a planned and systematic way.

Extension Programme Planning

Having described the concepts of planning and extension programme, now the stage is set to examine the concept of extension programme planning. A few points need to be explicated before attempting a definition.

1. Extension programme planning is a process

The dictionary meaning of 'process' is 'any phenomenon which shows a continuous change in time' or 'any continuous operation or treatment'. If we accept this concept of process, we view events and relationships as dynamic, ongoing, ever-changing and continuous. When we label something as a process, we also mean that it does not have a beginning, an end, a fixed sequence of events. It is not static, at rest. The basis for the concept of process is the belief that man cannot discover the structure of physical reality; man must create it.

This definition of process suggests that 'a process is involved in which a series of actions culminates in the accomplishment of a goal' (Boyle, 1965). Viewed in this way, the concept of process involves a method, i.e., a process should be viewed as a sequential set of steps or several systematically ordered steps of planning, the performance of which leads to the accomplishment of a goal. In extension programme planning, the immediate goal would be the development of a programme document.

The concept a person has of the extension programme planning process will affect actions and mode of researching the process. Many programme-planning processes take place at any particular time at different levels of the extension organization. For example, programme planning occurs at the national level (five-year plans), at the state level (state plans, annual plans of work) and at the block level. In fact, planning at the block level is taking place when:

- ❖ The long-time plan or projected plan is being developed;
- ❖ The schematic budget is being planned;
- ❖ The annual plan of work is being developed;
- ❖ Detailed plans for individual learning experiences are developed with a major project.

2. Extension programme planning is a decision-making process

Planning is basically a decision-making process— and so is extension programme planning. In extension programme planning, scientific facts are put to value judgements of the people through the implementation of a rational planning model in order to decide a programme which will be carried out through the extension teaching activities.

3. Extension programme planning requires advance thinking

If we could know 'where we are' and 'where we are to go' we could better judge 'what to do' and 'how to do'. This statement lies at the heart of the nature of planning. Planning does not take place in a vacuum or automatically. It has to be made to happen. The most basic fact giving rise to planning is that effective rural development results from choice, not from chance; it results from design, not from drift. Good extension programme planning is an intellectual activity since it usually involves a study and use of facts and principles. It requires knowledge, imagination and reasoning ability. It is a complex exercise as it involves people their needs, their interests, useful technology, educational process, analyzing a situation and making decision about what should be done, determining useful actions, projecting the desired shape of things in future and several other components, which are rarely simple.

4. Extension programme planning requires skill and ability on the part of planners:

Planning effective extension education programmes requires a number of high-level professional skills. Needed abilities include understanding and skill in the following broad areas:

- ❖ Understanding the nature and role of extension education organization.
- ❖ Knowledge and understanding of the technology related to the subject with which the programme is concerned.
- ❖ Ability to clarify the objectives of a programme and to so state them that they are useful in guiding its execution.
- ❖ Skill at seeing the relationship between principles and practice.
- ❖ Skill at inquiry and human relationships.

5. Extension programme planning is built round content

A programme regarding any extension activity can only be built on the basis of content. Without some express purpose, there can be no planning. Extension programme planning is built around available improved technology, the people, their resources, problems, needs and interests.

6. Extension programme planning is a social action process

Extension programme planning involves interaction and the decisions so taken in the form of a programme affect others. Interaction assumes some type of communication between two or more people in the planning process. So when the extension staff involving specialists and people's representatives decides on the programme content for extension teaching for the coming year, it is involved in social planning. In this process, the scientific data is put to value judgements so as to decide the intended direction of change and also the appropriate methods to be used to reach these goals. Further, the resultant programme has many social consequences in terms of interaction with other people, e.g., to inform them, educate them, persuade them, in order to introduce improved technology into their minds and actions.

7. Extension programme planning is a collaborative effort

Extension programme planning is a collaborative effort involving identification, assessment, evaluation of needs, problems, resources, priorities and solutions.

8. Extension programme planning is a system

Extension programme planning is a system as its procedures and processes are interrelated, ordered and linked progressively to form a collective whole. It includes several subprocesses, such as planning, designing, implementing, evaluation etc.

9. The end-product of extension programme planning is an extension programme

The first consideration for anyone who is to concern himself with a process or set of procedures for planning is to clearly identify the primary purpose of the planning process to be developed. Many have suggested that the purpose of planning is for educating those who participate. According to Vanderberg (1965), 'the primary purpose of any planning, first and foremost is that of developing a sound, defensible and progressive course of action or plan. In the process followed, many other benefits might accrue, such as the education of participants, but we want a plan which can and will be used'.

Extension programme planning defined

Having said that extension programme planning is a social action, decision– making, inter actional process in which advance thinking is needed for identifying the needs, interests and resources of the people through educational means to prepare a blueprint for action we are now ready to formally define this concept. However, it appears appropriate here to first list some of the definitions of **extension programme planning** as given in the literature.

1. Programme planing is viewed as a process through which representatives of the people are intensively involved with extension personnel and other professional people in four activities (Boyle, 1965)
 - ❖ Studying facts and trends;
 - ❖ Identifying problems and opportunities based on these facts and trends;
 - ❖ Making decisions about problems and opportunities that should be given priority; and
 - ❖ Establishing objectives or recommendations for future economic and social development of a community through educational programmes.
2. This are the process whereby the people in the country, through their leaders, plan their extension programme. Country and state professional extension staff members assist in this process. The end–result of this process is a written programme statement (Lawrence, 1962).
3. Extension programme planning is the process of determining, developing and executing programmes. It is a continuous process, whereby farm people, with the guidance and leadership of extension personnel, attempt to determine, analyse and solve local problems. In this, there are three characteristics:
 - ❖ What needs to be done
 - ❖ When it should be done and
 - ❖ How it should be done (Musgraw, 1962).
4. An organized and purposeful process initiated and guided by the agent, to involve a particular group of people in the process of studying their interests, needs and problems, deciding upon and planning education and other actions to change their situation in desired ways and making commitments regarding the role and responsibilities of the participants (Olson, 1962).

An analysis of these and other definitions of extension programme planning implies that it:

- ❖ Is a decision-making, social process;
- ❖ Involves advance thinking;
- ❖ Is a progressive step–by–step process;
- ❖ Uses educational means in defining the goals and situations;
- ❖ Is built around improved technology, people, their needs, interests, resources, values, attitudes and skills; and
- ❖ The end–product is a written statement of situation, problems, objectives and solutions.

- ❖ Thus extension programme planning may be defined as:
- ❖ A decision-making, social-action process in which extension educationists involve people's representatives,
- ❖ To determine their needs, problems, resources and priorities,
- ❖ In order to decide on an extension programme consisting of situation analysis, problems, objectives and solutions,
- ❖ This will form the basis of extension teaching plans for a given period.

Rationale of programme planning

1. Progress requires a design: Effective education is results of design not drift; it results from a plan—not from trial and error. The experience of workers in education and in other educational agencies has been that progress is made most effectively when a plan of action is set forth and followed. The pay-off for educational effort comes when people change their behaviour to improve their situation. These results come most rapidly when careful planning is done and when effective teaching methods are used.

2. Planning gives direction: There are no tests for directing the people's learning in extension. This arguments the difficulty of designing a plan and underscores the fact that planning is one of the most important jobs of extension workers.

In planning or constructing a course of study, the teacher should be guided by five major factors: (1) the purpose for which the course is offered, its aims; (2) the characteristics and needs of those who are to take the course; (3) the educational environment of these persons; (4) the sources of information available; and (5) the requirements or demands of the vocation or other uses to which the learning is to be put. These factors apply to the development of extension programmes as well as to the curriculum of the public schools. The factors that apply to the study of a situation will be considered more closely a little later.

3. Effective learning requires a plan: There must be consciously directed effort on the part of the teacher to give guidance to the learning process. The direction of this teaching effort can best be stated in terms of objectives. They must be developed with the people to be taught and must be capable of attainment by and with the people concerned.

4. Planning precedes action: The results of an action are dependent on the following: adequacy of analysis of the problems, situation of objectives and involvement of the people. Through the planning process, questions such as these are posed:

- i. What information do farm men and women need most?
- ii. Which kind of information shall be extended?
- iii. What information shall be extended first?
- iv. How much time shall be devoted to this line of work?
- v. How much effort shall be devoted to this line of work?

The answers to these questions lie in the programme planning process.

Kelsey and Hearne (1949) have given the following rationale for a planned extension programme .According to them, sound extension programme planning:

1. Is based on analysis of the facts in the situation
2. selects problems based on needs
3. determines objectives and solutions which offer satisfaction
4. reflects performance with flexibility
5. incorporate balance with emphasis
6. envisages a definite plan of work
7. is a continuous process
8. is a teaching process
9. is a coordinating process
10. involves local people and their institutions; and
11. provides for evaluation of results

Thus it could be said that planning programmes is an integral part of the development process and ensures better and efficient utilization of resources, accountability and human development.