

- **Setting agenda of important discussion:**

Media can have important influence on what we think and talk about, even though they may not decide what we must think. E.g. media can draw attention to problems faced by a population during famine, etc...

They can stimulate farmers to discuss points with extension workers.

- **Transferring knowledge:**

We learn only part of what we know about the world through our observations and direct experiences, or from hearing about other people's experiences and observations.

We gain much of what we know about the world from the media.

Knowledge is more likely to be transferred successfully if it meets a need or fills a vacuum.

New ideas diffused through media are more acceptable if they link-up with existing knowledge than when they attempt to modify it.

- **Forming and changing opinions**

Mass media play an important role in developing opinion when members of the public do not have strong views about particular issues. Media also have important effects in changing opinions when the position they advocate differs only slightly from one's own opinion.

Opinions expressed in the media are what always unanimous which makes it very difficult for members of the public to make up their own minds.

- **Changing behavior:**

Mass media can be used to change patterns of behaviors, especially where these changes are small and relatively unimportant or where they help us to fulfill an existing wish.

E.g. Adverts draw consumers attention to products they felt a need but didn't know existed.

We tend to assume that receivers are resistant when media fail to achieve behavioral change, although logically the source of the message may also be responsible.

Source credibility, reliability and relevance are very important. Credibility will generally be higher if the source is considered to be an expert, if he agrees with the receivers on important points.

We must choose a communication strategy which links up with the knowledge, language use and attitudes of a target group and with members' desire for information.

One of the most common problems or constraints of a national extension service is the shortage of field extension personnel to reach large number of farmers in widely spread geographical areas with in adequate transportation facilities.

Moreover, extension workers are usually overburdened with unnecessarily heavy work load which induces almost everything that has to do with farmers at village level. Such over reliance on extension workers is neither technically sound nor operationally efficient.

Some extension functions for certain purposes such as awareness creation, information delivery, motivational campaigns, etc. can be move efficiently and effectively performed by other means, channels, or non-extension groups. However, this does not mean that extension workers will be substituted by these channels, ratter they could be used for educational or instructional purposes which requires two-way interaction, field demonstration, group discussions.

The extension agent farmer coverage ratio in L. America was 1:2940, in Asia 1:2,661 and Africa 1:1,809. It was reported that only 16% of the extension programs would wide utilized mass media (FAO, 1990). Further it was reported that on average 26% of the extension workers time was spent on non-educational tasks (swanson, 1990)

This has been one of the weaknesses of agricultural extension systems in developing countries (i.e over dependency on extension workers)

The investment and operational cost of employing extension workers cost is one of the highest among agricultural extension expenditures.

Campaigns

It is an intensive teaching activity undertaken at an opportune time for a brief period, focusing attention in a concerted manner on a particular problem with a view to stimulate the widest

possible interest in a community, block or other geographical area. In an extension campaign, several media are used in a coordinated way and over a limited period of time in order to achieve particular extension objectives. Campaigns are launched only after a recommended practice has been forced acceptable to the people as a result of other extension methods like demonstrations etc.

The advantages of campaigns are that the media can support and reinforce each other, and the increased intensity of extension of activity for a short period can have a significant effect on farmers interest. However, they take a lot of time an effort to plan and may require a considerable amount of coordination between different agencies.