PLANNING AN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION PROGRAMME

Extension programme
An extension program is a statement of situation, objectives, problems, and solutions. It includes (i) the situation in which people are located, (ii) the problems that part of the situation, (iii) the objective to solve the problem, and recommendations to reach the objectives.

Programme Planning
Program planning is a decision making process. It involves (i) critical analysis of the existing situation and the problems, (ii) evaluation of the various alternatives to solve these problems, and (iii) the selection of the relevant ones, giving necessary priorities based upon needs and resources.

Objectives of Programme Planning
The general objective of program planning is to solve a problem or, in other words, to satisfy a need. Need is the difference between the desired situation and a present situation.

Present situation	Programme	Desired situation
(Need/Problem)	Planning	(Satisfaction/Solution)

The other specific objectives of programme planning are:

i. To ensure careful consideration of what is to be done and why,
ii. To establish objectives based on which progress could be measured and evaluated,
iii. To ensure continuity in development activities during changes in programme personnel,
iv. To avoid waste of time and ensure optimum use of human and capital resources,
v. To justify expenditure and to ensure the flow of funds,
vi. To have available in written form a statement for public use.

How to Plan an Agricultural Extension Programme
Generally, planning of an agricultural extension program involves the following steps:

i. Identification of problems
ii. SWOT analysis
iii. Analysis of stakeholders
iv. Analysis of the identified problems
v. Analysis of objectives
vi. Analysis of alternatives to achieve the objectives
vii. Development of a logical framework for the program

Step 1: Identification of Problems
The purpose of the identification of problems is to assess farmers' information needs in relation to their farming activities. This is why this process is also called the Farmers' Information Need Assessment (FINA). This is required to plan specific need-based programmes.

Procedure:
There are two broad ways to assess the problems or information needs of the farmers. They are:

a) Conventional Method:

- ✓ Collection of facts from office records, project reports, results of previous programs, etc.
- ✓ Data gathering by interview schedule, case study, survey, group interviews, personal observation, etc.
- ✓ Identifying farmers' problems on the basis of the analysis of the facts and the collected data.

b) Participatory Method

The participatory method is an advanced method of data gathering. It includes different "participatory" techniques. These methods are based on the principle that farmers themselves will identify and analyze their situations. The extension workers will play the role of facilitator in this process. In other words, an extension worker will passively and the farmer will actively play their roles in participatory methods (e.g. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)). Problem census is one of the PRA techniques currently used by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) to identifying farmers' farm-related problems. In this technique, the farmers identify their problems in a group setting. The groups usually consist of 20-30 farmers coming from the almost similar socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the groups are small in size and more or less homogenous in nature. The problem census involves the following steps:

- ✓ Arranging a group meeting in the block by the concerned Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer (SAAO).
- ✓ Presenting and describing a specific subject-matter before the group for discussion. This is to be done by the SAAO.
- ✓ Dividing the whole group into sub-groups and listing the problems by each of the sub-groups through discussion.
- ✓ Compiling all the problems identified and listed by the sub-groups, and selecting 10 most important problems through whole-group discussion.
- ✓ Splitting the whole group into sub-groups again and scoring the 10 selected problems by each of the sub-groups in order of importance. The most important problem is to be given a score of 10, the next important 9, and then 8 and so on. The least important problem is to be given a score of 1(one).
- ✓ Summing the sub-group scores obtained against each of the 10 selected problems and searching for solutions to these problems through whole group discussion.
- ✓ Recording the problems, total scores against each problem, and the solutions suggested by the farmers on a block-level problem census result sheet (Fig. 1). This is to be done by the SAAO.
- ✓ Closing and thanksgiving.

Date and place : Subject- matter : Size of group : Nature of group:					
Sl. Problems	Sub-group scoring				Total
No.	1	2	3	4	score
1. 2. 3.					

4. 5. 6.	
Sl. No. Problems	Solutions suggested by the farmers
1. 2.	

Fig 1. Format of a block level problem census result sheet

The problems thus identified at all the blocks along with their associated total scores are then compiled at upazila agriculture office. The scores against all the problems are again totaled, and based on these total scores, the problems are finally ranked and listed on an upazila level problem census result sheet (Fig. 2).

Nature of farmers' group:			
SL. No.	Problems	Total scores	Ranks based on total scores
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.			

Fig. 2. Format of upazila level problem census result sheet

Step 2: SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is an effective method of assessing internal **Strengths** and **Weaknesses** and external **Opportunities** and **Threats** of an organization or system that will equip the organization or system to respond appropriately for planning a programme.

Strengths ▪ Highly qualified and skilled manpower ▪ Efficient management ▪ Physical facilities ▪ Financial support, etc.	**Weaknesses** ▪ Inefficient management ▪ Few trainers ▪ Lack of physical facilities ▪ Lack of honesty and sincerity, etc.
Opportunities ▪ Few competitors ▪ High demand for training ▪ External donor cooperation ▪ High demand for hybrid technology, etc.	**Threats** ▪ Fewer job incentives ▪ Price fluctuation of agricultural inputs and commodities ▪ Environmental vulnerability ▪ Shrinkage of cultivable land and water resources, etc.

Fig 3. SWOT analysis format

Step 3: Analysis of Stakeholders

Individuals, groups, and organizations that are actively involved in the programme or whose interests may be positively or negatively affected as a result of programme execution or programme completion are called stakeholders of that program.

In an agricultural extension programme, stakeholders may be:

- All kinds of farmers' group, i.e. men, women, large, medium, small, marginal, and landless farmers.
- Inputs dealers.
- Credit organizations
- Government organization related to extension work
- NGOs related to extension work

In programme planning, stakeholders are analyzed on the basis of various aspects such as

a) Stakeholder – Who they are?
b) Need – What is needed from the stakeholders for success?
c) Orientation – What support you have from the stakeholders, are they for or against you, or are they neutral?
d) Impact – The effect or your success on the stakeholders.
e) Power – The degree of power which the stakeholders have in relation to your ability to achieve your goals.
f) Influence – The degree of influence the stakeholders have in relation to your ability to achieve your goals.

Step 4: Analysis of Problems

Many of the problems identified through FINA cannot be solved in the forms they appear. Through problem analysis, these problems are broken down again and again until they reach suitable forms that could be solved more conveniently and easily.

Step 5: Analysis of Objectives

Objective refers to the desired outcome or result. Therefore, objective analysis is the process that describes the situation that will occur once the problems in the problem tree/chart are solved. It shows us the point where we want to reach by solving the identified problems.

Step 6: Analysis of Alternatives

The term "alternatives" refers to the actions that need to be taken to achieve the objectives stated in the objective chart. Therefore, alternative analysis refers to the process of analyzing the various options to find out the best possible way(s) to achieve a (specific) objective. Searching the alternatives to a core problem can come from

i. Brain storming
ii. Objective Chart
iii. Solutions suggested by the farmers themselves during problem identification
iv. SAAOs and other extension workers
v. Books, booklets, and other written materials such as farm publications.

Step 7: Development of Logical Framework

Logical framework or simply log frame is a result-oriented programme or project planning, monitoring, and evaluation tool. Log frame helps to identify strategic elements

(activities/inputs, outputs, purpose, and goals) of a programme or project and their causal relationships and the external factors that may influence the success or failure of the programme or project.

The log frame is a 4 × 4 matrix, providing one page, a concise summary of major programme elements, and their relationships to each other. The log frame explains:

Why	A programme is carried out
What	The programme is expected to achieve
How	The programme is going to achieve results
Which	External factors are crucial for programme success
How	Success of the project can be assessed
When	Specific activities are expected to be completed
Where	Data to determine how the success of the programme can be found
What	The programme will cost

Proforma of a Log Frame:

Program Title:
Estimated program completion date:
Date of this summary preparation:

Narrative Summary	Objectively Verifiable Indicator (OVI)	Means Of Verification (MOV)	Important Assumption (IA)
Goal:			
Purpose:			
Output:			
Inputs/Activities:			

Explanation of the items in the log frame:

Inputs/Activities: Inputs/activities are the detailed work tasks to be executed for accomplishing the results/outputs, e.g. land acquisition, construction, manpower recruitment, and conduct training according to the nature of the programme.

Outputs/Results: Outputs are the achievements that need realization in order to reach the project purpose, e.g. land acquisition completed, construction completed, and farmers trained according to the inputs.

Purpose: Purpose is what is expected to result from having achieved the programme output. It describes the intended outcomes/effects and aspired benefits from the program, e.g. crop production increased.

Goal: Goal describes higher level objectives towards which the programme is expected to contribute or the ultimate impact of the programme, e.g. the socioeconomic status of the farmers increased through the generation of more income, contribution to GDP increased.

Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI): OVI tells us how we will know when an objective has been achieved. These are statements that define the performance standard to be reached in order to achieve an objective in terms of QQT (Quantity– How much? Quality– How well?

and Time– by when?). An indicator includes three basic dimensions: Quantity, Quality, and Time. In fact, performance against targets or objectives is measured through the use of indicators. SMART principles are used to set targets or objectives.

S = Specific, M = Measurable, A = Appropriate/Achievable, R = Realistic, T = Time bound.

Example of indicators:

Results/objectives	Indicators
Goal: Reduce poverty	75% (i.e. 7500 families) of the farmers will able to come out of poverty by 2025
Purpose: Increase rice production	Farmers rice production will be increased by 50% Rice harvesting in 2025 will be of better quality than 2020.
Output 1. Storage facilities built 2. Farmers trainings	1. 10 storage centers will be constructed by 2025 2. 10 thousands farmers will be trained by 2014

Means of Verification:
Means of verifications (MOVs) are the sources of information or data which provide evidence that objectives and related OVIs have been achieved. MOVs must be available, affordable, timely and useful.

Below are some of the usual sources of such information:

1. Report on programme/project manager
2. Office file
3. Programme/project proposal
4. Progress report
5. Survey and interviewing
6. Field survey note
7. Personal observation
8. Photographs, etc.

Important Assumptions (IAs):
Factors or conditions that are not directed to the programme but may exert significant influence on the success of the programme are called IA. Assumptions are used to connect an objective at one level to the objective at the next higher level. Assumptions are worded as positive statements.

Example of Assumptions:
Purpose: Rice production increase
Assumptions: a. No natural disaster
b. Seeds and fertilizer prices will not increase from the present rate
c. Stable rice price

Output: Farmers training
Assumptions: Farmers are willing to accept the modern cultivation method.