



Research Article

FARMER PARTICIPATION: A SOFT POWER OF EXTENSION SERVICE

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Received: April 01, 2019; Revised: April 11, 2019; Accepted: April 12, 2019; Published: April 15, 2019

Abstract: The Soft power is the ability to influence other behaviour or ability to shape the preferences of others in such a way that it leads to the achievement of the targeted purpose. In other words, soft power could be seen as the ability to use the power of attraction ability to influence the decision making process of the people. The participation is a process or organized efforts of voluntary involvement of people which influence them in development process, course of events, decisions making. Therefore, in the present study participation has been selected as an indicator of extension soft power and its relationship with agricultural extension services. Present study was conducted on the 220 respondents in two districts of Eastern Uttar Pradesh i.e., Varanasi and Mirzapur. Data were obtained on the basis of interview schedule. The findings of chi-square test indicated that there were no –significant association between farmer participation in public sector and private sector extension service in few services. It indicated that participation of farmer towards public and private extension services are same. However, a significant difference found in some services such as; expressing ideas, thought in the programme, taking Farmer Feedback at the end of programme and in suggesting feedback to be included in further programme. It has been clear from the data of significant association that private sector was found to be better than public sector.

Keywords: *Soft power, Behaviour, Perception, Extension service, Participation, Decision making*

Citation: Singh A.P. and Jirli B. (2019) Farmer Participation: A Soft Power of Extension Service. International Journal of Agriculture Sciences, ISSN: 0975-3710 & E-ISSN: 0975-9107, Volume 11, Issue 7, pp.- 8230-8232.

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Academic Editor / Reviewer: Dr Vijaya Lakshmi V, Suman Singh, Tank Prafulkumar Ramniklal

Introduction

Soft power is a new form of power, described as the ability to influence other behaviour or ability to shape the preferences of others in such a way that it leads to the achievement of the targeted purpose. In other words, soft power is the "ability to influence other behaviour" or "ability to shape the preferences of others what others want" without using hard or coercive power [1]. Soft power is basically relies on the ability to shape the preferences of others, ability to get what you want from others only through attraction rather than coercion or payment [2]. The meaningful participation to community development implies the ability positively to influence the course of events. This study further pointed out that participation is considered to be a voluntary contribution by the people to one or another of the public programmes supposed to contribute to national development but the people are not expected to take part in shaping the programme or criticizing its content [3]. Participation requires the voluntary and democratic involvement of people in contributing to the development effort, sharing equitably in the benefits derived there from and decision making in respect of setting goals, formulating policies and planning and implanting economic and social development programmes [4]. The benefits of promoting people's participation in obtaining information about needs, priorities and capabilities of local people, mobilizing local resources, improving utilization of facilities and services, obtaining more reliable feedback, building the capacity of local institutions. Again, the author has been reported that within a community there are socio-cultural differences that characterize the people and these social and cultural aspects act as determinant factors that affect farmers participation [5]. Government leaders in the country have emphasized that people should be given the freedom to participate in the making of all decisions which affect their lives [6]. Community participation is the process of "giving people more opportunities to participate effectively in development activities, empowering people to mobilize their own capacities, be social actors

rather than passive subjects, manage the resources, make decisions and control the activities that affect their lives" [7]. The People's participation is essential for the economic and political relationship within the wider society. it is not just a matter of involvement in project activities but rather the process by which rural people are able to organize themselves and, through their own organisation, are able to identify their own needs, share in design, implement, and evaluate participatory action. He further revealed that the meaningful participation is about achieving power which is the power to influence the decisions that affect one's livelihood [8]. The different levels of participation can take place depending on the conditions and influences that appear in the community [9]. The community participation as a method whereby the residents of a community are given a voice and choice to participate in issues affecting their lives [10]. Community participation empowering people by developing their skills and abilities so that they can negotiate with the rural development system and can make their own decisions in terms of their development needs and priorities. Similarly, findings of some other studies have also in accordance with this study [11]. The sustainable development can only be ensured through people's participation [12]. The participation is a way of helping the disadvantaged people to gain access to and control over resources or services such as training, farmer's tour, inputs and information needed to sustain and improve their livelihood [13]. Without participation, there are obviously no partnerships, development, and programme. Thus, lack of participation in the decision to implement an agricultural policy can lead to failure in the agricultural development [14]. The community participation provides individual with the opportunity to influence public decisions and has long been a component of the democratic decision making process [15]. From the above reviews it can be concluded that participation is a process or organized efforts of voluntary involvement of people which influence them in development

Table-1 Farmer Participation in Public extension service, n= 220

SN	Statements	Public Sector			
		Yes (F)	%	No (F)	%
1	Farmers had been intimated the date and agenda of programme.	173	78.64	47	21.36
2	Farmers expressed their ideas, thought in the programme	159	72.27	61	27.73
3	Farmers get offer to speak in the programme	162	73.64	58	26.36
4	Farmers views were considered and accepted	168	76.36	52	23.64
5	Farmers had the power to either reject or accept any activity proposed	179	81.36	41	18.64
6	Farmers monitored and evaluated the performance of an activity	166	75.45	54	24.55
7	Farmer Feedback taken at the end of programme	161	73.18	59	26.82
8	Farmer suggested feedback to be included in further programme	143	65	77	35
Average percentage			74.49		25.51

Table-2 Farmer Participation in Private extension service, n= 220

SN	Statements	Private sector			
		Yes (F)	%	No (F)	%
1	Farmers had been intimated the date and agenda of programme.	164	74.55	56	25.45
2	Farmers expressed their ideas, thought in the programme	167	75.91	53	24.09
3	Farmers get offer to speak in the programme	173	78.64	47	21.36
4	Farmers views were considered and accepted	163	74.09	57	25.91
5	Farmers had the power to either reject or accept any activity proposed	172	78.18	48	21.82
6	Farmers monitored and evaluated the performance of an activity	174	79.09	46	20.91
7	Farmer Feedback taken at the end of programme	167	75.91	53	24.09
8	Farmer suggested feedback to be included in further programme	156	70.91	64	29.09
Average percentage			75.91		24.09

Table-3 Farmer Participation in extension service [Ho²- farmer participation in both the sector (public and Private) is same, n=220]

Statements	Public sector				Private sector				χ^2 value d.f. = 2	χ^2 tabulated = 5.991, Level of significance = 0.05
	Yes (F)	%	No (F)	%	Yes (F)	%	No (F)	%		
Farmers had been intimated the date and agenda of programme.	173	78.63	47	21.36	164	74.54	56	25.45	4.79	Non-significant
Farmers expressed their ideas, thought in the programme	159	72.27	61	27.72	167	75.90	53	24.09	7.48	Significant
Farmers get offer to speak the programme	162	73.63	58	26.36	173	78.63	47	21.36	3.23	Non-significant
Farmers views were considered and accepted	168	76.36	52	23.63	163	74.09	57	25.90	3.86	Non-significant
Farmers had the power to either reject or accept any activity proposed	179	81.36	41	18.63	172	78.18	48	21.81	1.83	Non-significant
Farmers monitored and evaluated the performance of an activity	166	75.45	54	24.54	174	79.09	46	20.90	1.82	Non-significant
Farmer Feedback taken at the end of programme	161	73.18	59	26.81	167	75.90	53	24.09	7.04	Significant
Farmer suggested feedback to be included in further programme	143	65	77	35	156	70.90	64	29.09	6.55	Significant

process, course of events, decisions making *etc.* as well as play a vital role in setting goals, formulating policies and planning and implanting economic and social development programmes; it the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community to actively contribute to and influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development; It provides individual with the opportunity to influence public decisions and has long been a component of the democratic decision making process. It requires the voluntary and democratic involvement of people in contributing to the development effort, sharing equitably in the benefits derived there from and decision making in respect of setting goals, formulating policies and planning and implanting economic and social development programmes. However, lack of participation lead to failure in the sustainable development and influence the decision making process of the people. Therefore, we can select participation as an indicator of extension soft power.

Material and Methods

This is very new study in discipline of extension and has never been done a regional study of soft power in India before. So the researcher selects Eastern U.P. for conducting the research because of having familiarity with social conditions, local language and culture of people, which could help in extracting information from respondents. The research was conducted in two districts of Eastern Uttar Pradesh *i.e.*, Varanasi and Mirzapur, which were selected purposively. The geographical area and population density of the district were the selection criteria; two development blocks *i.e.*, Harahua from district Varanasi and Narainpur from district Mirzapur were selected by simple random selection; four Panchayat were selected from each selected block by simple random selection. The respondents were selected proportionately according to the population of village. Thus, a total of 220 respondents were selected for the purpose of study.

The respondents were the beneficiaries of public and private extension services. The research used explanatory research designs which focus on the discovery of ideas and insights and conducted prior to the main investigation. Comparative research method was selected. This study was based only on primary data and the data were collected through personal interview method the data were classified, tabulated and analyzed in the light of the objective of the study. To analyze the Farmer Participation in public and private extension agencies a suitable structured interview scheduled was developed and presented to the ten experts of the area for examining the suitability of the items included in the scale, and to check the inter scorer reliability of the schedule. The chi-square analysis was used to find the association between public and private extension service sector in respect of selected indicators.

Observations and Analysis

Farmer Participation in Public extension service showed in [Table-1]. The overall results indicated that about two third Farmers (74.48 %) had the participation in public extension service. While more precisely these results indicated that farmers have greater participation in some of the public services *e.g.*, the power to either reject or accept any activity proposed (81.36%), Farmers had been intimated the date and agenda of programme (78.63%), with consultation and farmers views were considered and accepted (76.36%). Based on these findings it could be noticed that public sector extension services are more efficient to influence the people softly in terms of farmer participation. According to this section the public sector has more soft power so they are in position to influence the people much better. In precise way some of the dimensions of participation has more soft power such as the power to either reject or accept any activity proposed, Farmers had been intimated the date and agenda of programme, Farmers views were considered and accepted than the other dimension.

The results reported in the above [Table-2] is concerned with the Farmer Participation in Private extension service. According to the findings of the above table it has been found that more than two third Farmers (75.90%) had the participation in private extension services. Further the results clearly revealed that farmers had more participation in some precise private sector services like, Farmers monitored and evaluated the performance of an activity (79.09%), Farmers had the power to either reject or accept any activity proposed (78.18%), and farmers expressed their ideas and thought in the programme (75.90%). As it could be seen in public sector services, the private sector extension services also have more soft power to influence the people in terms of farmer participation. On the basis of findings, it could be stated that some section of farmer participation has greater tendency to influence the people softly than other sections of the farmer participation. The findings of the [Table-3] reported the association between different aspects of farmer participation in extension services provided by public and private sectors. Chi-square test is performed to see the association between public and private sector services. On the basis of results of this table, it could be observed that there was no –significant association between farmer participation in public sector and private sector extension service in few services. It indicated that farmer participation towards public and private extension services is same. However, a significant difference was found in some services such as; expressing ideas, thought in the programme, taking Farmer Feedback at the end of programme and in suggesting feedback to be included in further programme. It has been clear from the data of significant association that private sector was found to be better than public sector. By taking into consideration the results of this association table it has been found that there is significant association between most of the sections of the farmer participation in both public and private sector which indicates that both public and private sector extension services have different levels of soft power in terms of farmer participation. This means they have different tendency to influence people. While there is no significant difference between some sections of the participation, which reveals that in these sections of farmer participation have equal soft power to influence people in both sectors. Finally these findings stated that private sector extension services have greater soft power to influence the people in comparison to the public sector extension services.

Conclusion

Participation plays a vital role in setting goals, formulating policies and planning and implanting economic and social development programme. It requires the voluntary and democratic involvement of people in contributing to the development effort, sharing equitably in the benefits derived there from and decision making in respect of setting goals, formulating policies and planning and implanting economic and social development programmes. While, lack of participation lead to failure in the sustainable development and influencing the decision making process of the people. Therefore, it has been identified as an indicator of extension soft power. The findings indicated that in both i.e. public sector and private sector farmers have middle level of participation but in some dimensions public sector was more effective than private sector and in some sections private sector is far better than public sector While on the dimension of taking feedback from the participants has low level of participation in both the sectors.

Application of research: The term soft power is new form of power and relatively new word in discipline of agricultural extension. From a broader sense, it can contribute to the academic research value and also in planning and implementation of extension programme by incorporating participation as an indicator of soft power in extension services.

Research Category: Extension Education

Acknowledgement / Funding: Authors are thankful to Department of Extension Education, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, 221005, Uttar Pradesh, India

***Research Guide or Chairperson of research: Dr B Jirli**

University: Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, 221005, Uttar Pradesh

Research project name or number: PhD Thesis, Soft power of extension services and its effectiveness in Eastern UP

Author Contributions: All authors equally contributed

Author statement: All authors read, reviewed, agreed and approved the final manuscript. Note-All authors agreed that- Written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to publish / enrolment

Study area / Sample Collection: Varanasi and Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh

Cultivar / Variety name: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None declared

Ethical approval: This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by any of the authors.
Ethical Committee Approval Number: Nil

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