

Why Managerial Skills are Essential for Extension Personnel

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OPEN ACCESS

Keywords

Managerial Skills, Extension Professionals, Farmers and Community Development

How to cite this article:

Borah, S. and Kalita, H. C. 2025. Why Managerial Skills are Essential for Extension Personnel. *Vigyan Varta* 6 (11): 60-63.

ABSTRACT

Managerial skills are vital for extension personnel as they play a crucial role in planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating extension programs effectively. Extension personnel often work at the interface between research institutions and rural communities, where efficient management ensures smooth coordination of resources, activities, and stakeholders. Strong managerial skills help them set clear goals, allocate resources wisely, delegate responsibilities, and monitor progress systematically. These skills also enhance leadership qualities, enabling extension workers to motivate and guide farmers or community members toward adopting improved technologies and practices. Moreover, effective time management, problem-solving, and decision-making abilities contribute to higher program impact and sustainability. By integrating managerial competencies with technical expertise, extension personnel can deliver more efficient services, foster community participation, and achieve developmental objectives. Therefore, managerial skills are not just supportive tools but essential components for ensuring successful extension interventions and rural development outcome.

INTRODUCTION

Extension organization is a formalized structure of roles or position targeted at achieving extension activities. It consists of a body of people who offers need-based extension services. Its main aim is to accomplish organizational objectives in the field of extension through the co-ordinate use of human and material resources.

Management is required in extension organizations for planning, organizing and controlling of all activities related to creation of utilities. It is required for the procurement, development, compensation, integration and maintenance of employee i.e the people involved with the extension organization. Management is the key role of an Extension Organization and is responsible for driving the transition process through making the necessary decisions. For effective utilization of management of funds required in any extension activity (Cascio, 1974).

Effective management in agricultural extension services is crucial for enhancing productivity and fostering sustainable development (Gerhart and Fang, 2005). Extension personnel, who serve as the bridge between research institutions and the farming community, require a diverse set of managerial skills to perform their roles effectively. (Hoffman and shipper, 2012)

Objective:

1. Strengthen managerial skills of extension personnel.
2. Effective functions of extension system.

Following are the key managerial skills or competencies for extension personnel for smooth functioning of their work:

Program Planning and Implementation: Developing and executing extension programs

that address the specific needs of the community. This involves setting clear objectives, designing actionable plans, and efficiently allocating resources.

Communication Skills: Conveying complex agricultural information in an understandable manner to diverse audiences, including farmers, stakeholders, and policymakers. Effective communication also encompasses active listening and feedback mechanisms.

Leadership and Team Management: Guiding and motivating teams, resolving conflicts, and fostering a collaborative environment. Strong leadership ensures that extension activities are carried out efficiently and align with organizational goals.

Problem-Solving and Decision-Making: Identifying challenges within agricultural practices and developing innovative solutions. This requires analytical thinking and the ability to make informed decisions under pressure.

Adaptability and Flexibility: Adjusting to changing circumstances, such as emerging agricultural trends, climate variations, and evolving community needs. Adaptable extension personnel can modify strategies to remain effective in dynamic environments.

Technical Knowledge and Expertise: Maintaining a strong foundation in agricultural sciences and staying updated with the latest research and technological advancements to provide accurate and relevant advice to the farming community.

Interpersonal Skills: Building and maintaining relationships with farmers, colleagues, and other stakeholders. Empathy, cultural sensitivity, and effective negotiation skills are essential for successful interactions. (Chen and Aryee, 2007). Interpersonal skills

are essential for extension personnel because their work involves continuous interaction with farmers, communities, and various stakeholders. Strong interpersonal skills help them to:

- **Build trust and rapport** with the community.
- **Communicate information clearly and effectively.**
- **Motivate and inspire participation** in extension programs.
- **Understand the needs and concerns** of different groups.
- **Resolve conflicts and misunderstandings** in a positive way.
- **Promote teamwork and cooperation** among stakeholders.

Good interpersonal skills enable extension personnel to create a supportive and collaborative environment, which is crucial for the success of development initiatives.

Conflict resolution: Addressing disagreements and conflicts within the community or among stakeholders in a constructive manner. Conflict resolution is essential for extension personnel because they often work closely with farmers, communities, and organizations where differences in opinions, interests, or expectations can arise. Effectively managing and resolving these conflicts helps:

- **Maintain trust and cooperation** among all stakeholders.
- **Ensure smooth implementation** of extension programs and activities.
- **Promote teamwork** and a positive working environment.

- **Prevent escalation** of misunderstandings that may hinder development work.

- **Enhance communication** and mutual understanding between parties.

By resolving conflicts constructively, extension personnel can foster stronger community relationships and achieve program goals more efficiently.

Collaboration: Building relationships and working effectively with different organizations, government agencies, and community groups.

Time Management: Prioritizing tasks and managing time effectively to handle multiple responsibilities and meet deadlines, ensuring that extension services are delivered promptly.

Resource Management: Efficiently utilizing available resources, including finances, equipment, and human capital, to maximize the impact of extension programs.

Emotional Intelligence: Recognizing and managing one's emotions, as well as understanding and influencing the emotions of others, to build stronger relationships and navigate social complexities within the community.

CONCLUSION:

By developing strong managerial skills, extension personnel can significantly improve the efficiency, reach, and impact of agricultural extension services, ultimately leading to better productivity and sustainable agricultural development. Developing these managerial skills enables extension personnel to effectively address the challenges in the agricultural sector, leading to improved outcomes for farmers and communities.

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