

## Capacity Building of Extension Agents for Sustainable Dissemination of Agricultural Information and Technologies in Developing Countries

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**Abstract :** Farmers are in need of regular and relevant information relating to new technologies. Production of extension materials has been found to be useful in facilitating the process. Extension materials help to provide information to reach large numbers of farmers quickly and economically. However, as good as extension materials are, previous materials produced are not used by farmers. The reasons for this include lack of involvement of farmers in the production of the extension materials, most of the extension materials are not relevant to the farmers' environments, the agricultural extension agents lack capacity to prepare the materials, and many extension agents lack commitment. These problems led to this innovative capacity building of extension agents. This innovative approach involves five stages. The first stage is the diagnostic survey of farmers' environment to collect useful information. The second stage is the development and production of draft extension materials. The third stage is the field testing and evaluation of draft materials by the same farmers that were involved at the diagnostic stage. The fourth stage is the revision of the draft extension materials by incorporating suggestions from farmers. The fifth stage is the action plans. This process improves the capacity of agricultural extension agents in the preparation of extension materials and also promotes engagement of farmers and beneficiaries in the process. The process also makes farmers assume some level of ownership of the exercise and the extension materials.

**Keywords :** capacity building, extension agents, dissemination, information/technologies

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