

PROBLEMS FACED BY EXTENSION PERSONNEL – SOME COMPARISONS BETWEEN VIETNAM AND INDIA

Nguyen Cong Thanh¹ and Baldeo Singh²

¹*Cuu Long Rice Research Institute, Can Tho, Vietnam*

²*Division of Agricultural Extension, IARI, New Delhi, India*

ABSTRACT

One of the attempts of this study to find out the problems has been faced in every day extension works in main rice production and export areas of Vietnam and India. Through the analysis and comparison, the authors suggested some solutions to overcome the problems. The findings for Vietnamese extension personnel, there were more problems faced than those of Indian extension personnel (12 as compared to 7 problems); in which, there were four problems. Those were relatively similar to the problems faced by Indian extension personnel i.e., lack of trainings, lack of transportations, lack of information facilities and lack of funds and these problems were revealed by 32; 10; 25 and 35 per cent of respondents, respectively. The remaining eight problems, arranged from more to less importance were lack of training facilities (77%), low incomes (57%), and economic problems of the families of extension personnel (43%), problem of transportation (33%), low education of farmers (8%), poor support from local government/organizations (15%), overloaded works (15%) and lack of experiences (17%). In case of Indian extension personnel, there were total seven problems being faced in every day carrying out extension works. Majority of them expressed that they are facing the problem of lack of departmental transportations (50%). The second most importance problem as perceived by them was lack of supporting staffs. The third one was the lack of training (37%). Other problems were lack of information facilities (30%); lack of fund (27%); lack of farmers' activities and working procedures (6 & 8 %, respectively). From the findings of the study, it is imperative to call for attention from government, policy makers, and planners to design effective policy/strategy that would ensure to overcome these problems to enhance the role of extension participation in the process of agricultural production and export.

INTRODUCTION

Vietnam and India are the two main rice producing and exporting countries, which have been contributing rice export to ensure the food security in the world. In the recent years, the exporting rice quantity of the two countries ranked number two and three in the international markets for Vietnam and India respectively. An Giang and Vinh Long provinces belonging to the Mekong Delta of Vietnam and Punjab and West Bengal of India were the main rice production and export areas. The Mekong Delta of Vietnam has an area of 4 million ha with 16.2 million tons of rice production or half of the total rice production in Vietnam (Bui 2000). Punjab is advanced in agriculture and it ranks number one in rice yield with 3.35 tonnes per ha, whereas, in average all India was 2 tones per ha (AMSA 2001). Another state, West Bengal is the highest rice production area of India in the recent years. In the field of rice production and export, extension organizations in general and extension personnel in particular deal with important roles in educating/training/mobilizing farmers in rice production and export (Nguyen and Singh 2005). Agricultural extension organizations had done a lot of works such as transferring new technology/varieties; educating the farmers to aware new policy/regulation of the government or international organizations; training for understanding new procedures of production; mobilizing rural community to participate in exporting rice production programme; building rural roads, rural sanitary and so on...

However, some problems faced in every day extension works have been reducing these roles of extension personnel. Therefore, this study has conducted with the attempt to analyze the main problems faced by Vietnamese and Indian extension personnel and to compare the situation between them. The findings also call for attention from the government and other responsible organizations in both the countries to adjust suitable policies or solutions for overcoming these problems. This is also creating good working environment and conditions for extension personnel to do good jobs, which would result into promoting agricultural production and exports.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the main rice production and export areas; those were An Giang and Vinh Long provinces of Vietnam and Punjab and West Bengal states of India. Farmers in these areas are progressive and aware of the latest developments in agriculture. Those characteristics are the dominated points of the study locations and it was selected purposively for the study.

Selection of the respondents

Forty-five district extension personnel and 40 village extension personnel in the selected locations in Vietnam plus 30 each for district and block levels of extension personnel in India were selected randomly for the study. The total of the respondents for both the countries were 145.

Selection of variables

In order to understand the background information, advantages and disadvantages of the extension personnel in India and Vietnam and make the interesting comparison, the variables related to their personal, social, economic characteristics and their problems/constraints were selected. Information about these variables is given as under: age, education, income, training received, social participation and the problems faced in every day carrying out extension works.

Collection of data

The investigator collected the data from the extension personnel through questionnaires.

Statistical analysis of data

The data were analyzed with the help of the statistical methods like frequency, percentage and other suitable statistical tools by the application of SPSS programme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of extension personnel

The profile of Vietnamese and Indian extension personnel has been presented in the Table 1. The total extension personnel for India were 30 each for district and block level. In case of Vietnam, total number of respondents was 85, in which 45 for district level and 40 for village level.

Age

The age of selected Indian extension personnel ranged from 24 years to 55 years with the average of 39.17 years. The majority of the district extension personnel was in young age (24-35 years; 63%) followed by middle age (36-49 years; 23%) and the old age group (50 years & above; 13 %). For block level, the major percentage belonged to middle age group (50%) followed by young group (37%). The old group was low (13%).

In case of Vietnam, age of selected extension personnel at district level ranged from 25 to 55 years. The majority of the extension personnel was in young age (25-35 years; 67 %) followed by middle age (36-49 years; 29 %) and the old age group (50 years and above; 4 %). The average age was 33.4 years. Thus, the maximum percentage of extension personnel was in the young age. At village level, the age ranged from 25 years to 52 years with average of 39.4 years. The major percentage belonged to middle age group (52%) followed by young group (33%) and old group (15%).

Gender

Most of the Indian extension personnel at district and block level were males (100% for district level and 97% for block level), whereas only one female extension personnel (3%) was found at block level. This shows wide disparity and a need to concern in increasing the number of female extension personnel to keep balance in gender to attend the clients accordingly. Similar to India, Vietnamese extension personnel at district level were males (93%) and the very less number of extension personnel were females. The same situation was observed at village level. Extension personnel in the village level were mostly males (93%), the female extension personnel only 7% (Table 1). It is also calling for attention to increase the participation of female extension personnel.

Education

The education levels of Indian extension personnel were found to be high as compared to Vietnamese extension personnel. All the extension personnel at both district and block levels had educational levels of BSc., MSc., and Ph.D. At district level, MSc. extension personnel were highest with 46 per cent, followed by the same percentages for Ph.D. and BSc. extension personnel with 27 per cent. For the extension personnel at block level, it was seen from Table 1 that half of them (50%) had M.Sc. degree and another half (50%) BSc. degree. There were no extension personnel with Ph.D. degree at block level (Table 1).

For Vietnam, most of the extension personnel at district level were Assistant Agricultural Officers (73%) and having education 10 or 12 (High school) plus 2 (10/12 + 2) level and the remaining number had BSc. degree (27%). Educational situation was very low at the village level. There were no BSc. extension personnel at village level. Agricultural specialities were only Assistant Agricultural Officers (25%). Most of them had high school education (37%). Remaining two categories were Secondary and Elementary with 33 per cent and 5 per cent respectively. As compared to India, the level of education of extension personnel at district level in the Mekong Delta was still very low. In India, the qualification for the post of extension personnel was graduation that is why more than half of the extension personnel were graduates. Now the qualifications has been modified to post graduation and this may be the reason that nearly one third of the extension personnel were postgraduate. There were ten per cent of the extension personnel who held Ph.D. degree (Garg 2003).

Service experiences

For service experiences of Indian extension personnel at district level, the large number of the extension personnel (73%) were belonging to low group of service experience *i.e.*, less than ten years, followed by high group of service experience (above 20 years; 20%) and medium group of service experience was low (11-20 years; 7%). In case of block level, most of extension personnel had low service experience (46%). The same percentages for both medium and high group of service experiences *i.e.* 27 per cent were observed.

In case of Vietnam, a large number of the extension personnel (84%) had low service experience *i.e.*, less than ten years, followed by medium service experience (11-20 years; 9%) and high service experience (above 20 years; 7%). In case of village level, most of extension personnel had low service experience (90%). Only 10 per cent were belonging to medium group and no one got high service experience.

Monthly income

The data from Table 1 reveal that both district and block levels Indian extension personnel had very high monthly income *i.e.* \$399 and \$343 in average, respectively. The unhappy situation, which is in contrast to Indian extension personnel, both district and village levels of Vietnamese extension personnel had very low monthly income. In average, the basic monthly income from the government was only \$69 for district level and \$27 for village level. They revealed this problem as the major constraint, which they faced in doing their extension activities and it needs to be improved as soon as possible.

Training received

In this survey, only 20 per cent of Indian extension personnel at district level and 40 per cent extension personnel at block level received training programmes from 1 to 4 courses. This percentage was very less as compared to Vietnamese extension personnel. In general, Indian extension personnel received very less training related to rice production and export and extension activities.

Training received at district level of Vietnamese extension personnel was found to have undergone at least one training course. The number of training received for each extension personnel ranged from 1 to 10 training courses. The percentages of low category (1-4 courses) and medium category (5-6 courses) were the same 6.7 per cent. The High category (7-10 courses) was majority in number with 86.6 per cent. About 15.0 per cent of extension personnel at village level were found to have no training. Most of them received low level (1-4 courses; 70 %); remaining 5.0 per cent and 10.0 per cent belonged to medium and low categories of training received, respectively.

In training, the disadvantage was similar between Vietnamese and Indian extension personnel as there was the lack of emphasis and opportunities in the area of rice quality standards for export, rice export marketing, value addition and the new economic regime/WTO, etc. These issues need more attention and extension personnel should be equipped adequately to help farmers to derive benefits from the new opportunity of globalization of agriculture and WTO's provisions.

Social participation

As compared to Vietnamese extension personnel, most of Indian extension personnel took part in social participation. Majority of district level extension personnel were members in social, religion organization/associations and 33 per cent of them were the office-bearers in the social participation. In case of block level, 50 per cent and 23 per cent were members and office-bearers respectively. Only 27 per cent of extension personnel at block level did not take part in social participation.

For Vietnam, at district level, one prominent aspect was that very little number of extension personnel was taking part in social organizations. Majority of them (96%) had no membership in any social organizations. Only one extension personnel was found to be office bearer and another was member in social organization. This result indicates a need to encourage district extension personnel for taking part in social organizations such as farmer's and women's associations to help in the development of these social organizations. In contrast to district level, extension personnel at village level had higher level of social participation. Most of them were office bearers (48%). Those having memberships were 27 per cent and non-members were 25 per cent (Table 1).

Table 1. Profile of the extension personnel

Characteristics	Category / range	District		Block/Village	
		Vietnam	India	Vietnam	India
Age (year)	Young (25-35years)	67	63	33	37
(min 24 max 62, mean 36 yrs)	Middle (36-49 years)	29	23	52	50
	Old (50 & above)	4	13	15	13
Genders	Male	93	100	93	97
	Female	7	0	7	3
	Elementary	0	0	5	0
	Secondary	0	0	33	0
	High School	0	0	37	0
Education	Assistant Ag. Officer	73	0	25	0
	B.Sc.	27	27	0	50
	M.Sc.	0	46	0	50
	Ph.D.	0	27	0	0

Characteristics	Category / range	District		Block/Village	
		Vietnam	India	Vietnam	India
Service Experience	Low (1-10 yrs)	84	73	90	46
	Medium (11-20 yrs)	9	7	10	27
	High (above 20 yrs)	7	20	0	27
Income/month (USD)	No-training	69	399	27	343
	Low (1-4 course)	0	80	15	60
Training Received	Medium (5-6 courses)	7	20	70	40
	High (7-10 courses)	7	0	5	0
	Member	86	0	10	0
Social participation	Office bearer	2	67	27	50
	Non-members	2	33	48	23
		96	0	25	27

Vietnam: District level: N = 45; Village level: N = 40; India: District level: N = 30; Block level: N = 30

Facilities available with extension personnel

The results of the study on the facilities available with the extension personnel both India and Vietnam were shown in the Table 2.

Television

In case of India, television acquisition accounted for 87 per cent and 100 per cent of extension personnel at district and block levels, respectively. In case of Vietnam, television acquisition was 100 per cent of the extension personnel at district level, and 98 per cent for village level extension.

Motorbike

The data shown that motorbike acquisition accounted for 63 and 60 per cent for district and block levels Indian extension personnel, respectively. The data in Vietnam were 100 and 85 per cent for district and village levels, respectively

Telephone

In India, telephone acquisition accounted for 67 and 100 per cent for extension personnel at district and block level, respectively. The data in Vietnam were 60 and 53 per cent for block and village level, respectively.

Mobile phone

In India, mobile phones were available with 67 and 60 per cent in district and block extension personnel, respectively. In Vietnam, the data were 40.0 per cent of extension personnel at district level, and 17.5 per cent of extension personnel at village level. These numbers can exhibit low-income situation of extension personnel at village level or the low requirement of mobile phone for them when doing their work at villages.

Computer

Computer nowadays is very important facility for extension personnel. It was found available with 27 and 40 per cent for district and block levels Indian extension personnel, respectively. In Vietnam, the fairly high number of computers was seen at district level (71%) to help extension personnel doing their works, but this was only 13 per cent at village level.

Internet

Internet facility at district and block levels of Indian extension personnel were seen 17 and 40 per cent available, respectively. In Vietnam, these were 67 and 3 per cent for district and village level. These numbers indicate that the facilities are currently needed to improve their work of extension personnel at district level in both countries.

Car/Boat

Car is not available for Vietnamese extension personnel, but they were found to be 20 and 40 per cent at district and block level for Indian extension personnel. This available facility also meant that extension personnel in India got more incomes than in case of Vietnam to maintain a car.

Due to the specific condition in the Mekong Delta, rivers and canals abundantly crossed, motorboat was available with 43 per cent at village level of extension personnel.

Table 2. Facilities available with extension personnel (%)

Facility	District level		Block/village level	
	Vietnam	India	Vietnam	India
Television	100	87	98	100
Motorbike	100	63	85	60
Telephone	100	67	53	60
Mobile phone	40	73	18	73
Computer	71	27	13	40
Internet	67	17	3	40
7. Car	0	20	0	40
8. Motorboat	0	0	43	0

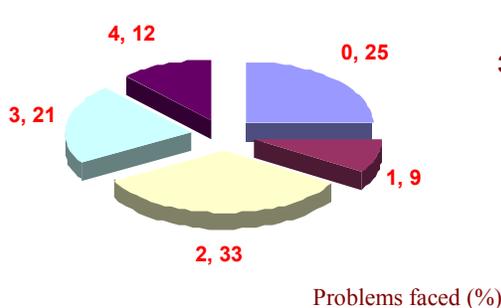
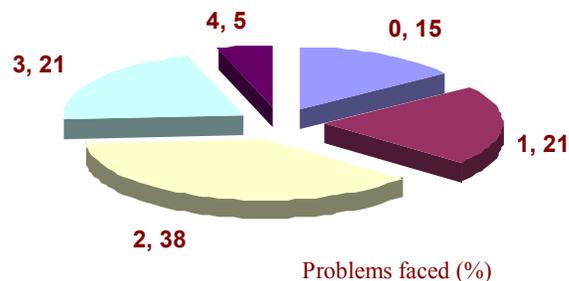
Vietnam: District level: N = 45; Village level: N = 40; India: District level: N = 30; Block level: N = 30

Problems faced in carrying out everyday extension works

One of the main objectives of the study was to work out the problems, which are revealed by the stakeholders, in which, extension personnel have important role not only to rice production of farmers but also to entire exporting process. The study for the examination of the problems carefully from the extension personnel to help for understanding the real situations in rice production and export of India and Vietnam, which are useful to find out the suitable solutions for overcoming the problems and promoting rice production and exports.

Before coming for problems' analysis, it is necessary to understand the problems, which extension personnel faced in carrying out their everyday extension works because it was related to the extension personnel's performance. The study raised the question "what are the problems being faced in carrying out your extension works?". The results of this survey have shown from Fig. 1a to Fig. 1b for both Indian and Vietnamese extension personnel, respectively.

Fig. 1a depicted problems faced by Indian extension personnel. It can be worry to understand from this rounding graph that almost all the extension personnel (75%) faced from 1 to 4 problems in everyday carrying out their works and only 25 per cent of them did not face any problems. In specifically, the extension personnel, who faced 1, 2, 3; and 4 problems, were 9; 33; 21 and 12 per cent, respectively.

**Figure 1a.** Problems faced by Indian extension personnel**Figure 1b.** Problems faced by Vietnamese extension

In case of the problems faced by Vietnamese extension personnel, which is presented in the Fig. 1b, the results revealed that only 15 percent of extension personnel at both district and village levels of extension personnel expressed that they did not face any problems. Almost all of them (85%) were facing 1 to 4 problems. Especially, they were 21; 38; 21 and 5 per cent facing 1; 2; 3; and 4 problems, respectively. Majority (38%) extension personnel faced two problems in carrying out their works.

The finding is calling for the specific attention from government, planners and policy makers of both the countries to pay concern in resolving the problems. There is also creating good condition for extension personnel to do good jobs, which would result into promoting agricultural production and exports.

Problems being faced of extension personnel in details

The Figure 2a and 2b depicted in details of the problems faced by Indian and Vietnamese extension personnel respectively. For Indian extension personnel, there were total seven problems being faced. Majority of them expressed that they are facing the problem of lack of departmental transportations (50%). This problem caused the difficulty in contract with the farmers and limited the extension activities.

The second most importance problem faced as perceived by them was lack of supporting staffs. This problem, which caused more workloads and lack of complete team to do extension works as most of supporting staffs positions was lying vacant.

The third problem faced was the lack of training, which was expressed by 37 per cent of extension personnel. As per the data in the profile of Indian extension personnel of the Table 1, only 20 and 40 per cent of them at district and block levels had received training programmes with 1 to 4 courses. The lack of training resulted in the more percentages of extension personnel who got poor awareness about rice export and its qualities/standards and other important issues relating to globalization of agricultures and WTO's provision *etc.*

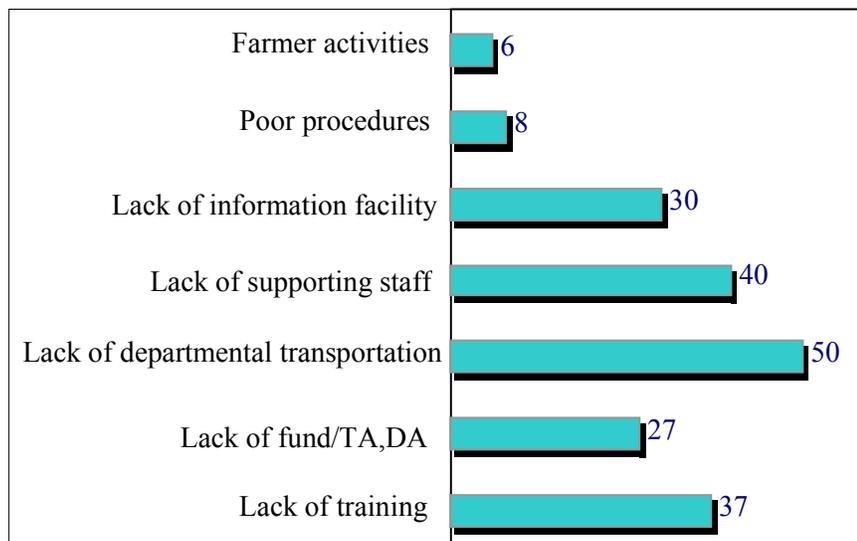


Figure 2a. Problems faced by Indian extension personnel in details

This finding calls for the attention from the upper extension functionaries to look into and overcome the problem in the near future.

The fourth problem, which was revealed by 30 per cent of extension personnel, was the lack of information facilities. The information facilities according to them were official/departmental telephone, computer, and internet facilities. These information facilities nowadays are very important to help extension personnel in carrying out their works, so it is an urgent need to equip as much as possible to them both at district and block levels. These facilities delivering a variety of services *via* the internet and telephone with a view to transform the Government from being a *procedures and power-centered mechanism* to *citizen and service-centered platform* using the tools of information technology (Rao 2003).

The fifth more important problem as perceived by 27 per cent of respondents was the lack of fund. The lack of fund limits the extension activities, especially in organization of training programme for farmers and extension workers about rice production technologies, rice export qualities, varieties and so on.

Two other problems, which were not much important, as expressed by fewer percentages of respondents were lack of farmers' activities and working procedures (6 and 8 %, respectively).

For Vietnamese extension personnel, there were more problems faced than those of Indian extension personnel (12 problems) as depicted in the Figure 2b.

It is observed that there were four problems, which were relatively similar to the problems faced by Indian extension personnel *i.e.*, lack of trainings, lack of transportations, lack of information facilities and lack of funds and these problems were revealed by 32; 10; 25 and 35 per cent of respondents, respectively. The remaining eight problems, which need to discuss more in details, are as follows:

The first most important problem was lack of training facilities which was expressed by more than two third of the respondents (77%). In this issue, they revealed lack of training documents including leaflets, and other electronic tools use for training programmes.

The second and third important problems faced (57 and 43 % of respondents), which in turn, can be said the "cause and effect relationship", were low incomes and economic problems of the families of extension personnel. The low income can be seen as the big problems faced for almost all Vietnamese extension personnel, especially, at village level; because, at the present, for every village there were 1 or 2 extension personnel, they did not have formal salaries and have only some small allowances on monthly basis. Therefore, with the low income and economic problem of families, they cannot have peace of mind to do good extension works. In general, the average incomes of Vietnamese extension personnel were very low as compared to those of Indian extension personnel (\$27 – \$69 as compared to \$399 – \$343 of district and block levels of Indian extension personnel, respectively). This problem needs the urgent attention from Vietnamese Government and upper extension organizations to solve problems as soon as possible.

The relatively important problem faced by Vietnamese extension personnel, especially those at the Mekong Delta, was the problem of transportation (33%). For this, they revealed reasons such as large area of coverage and the difficulty in transportation due to the specific condition of the Mekong Delta region where there were a lot of river, canals and poor infrastructures.

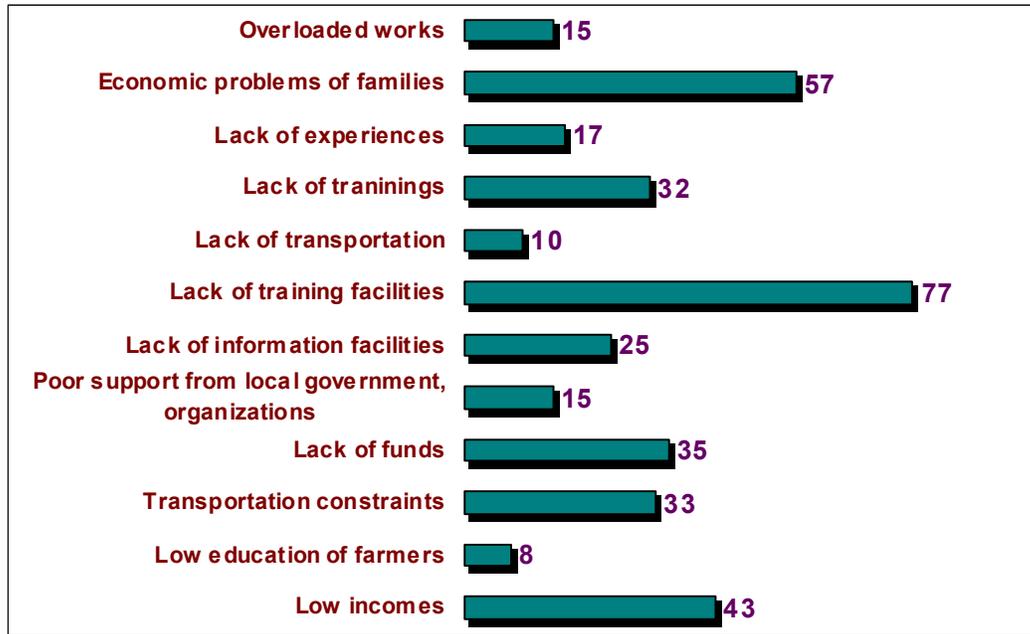


Figure 2b. Problems faced by Vietnamese extension personnel in details

The remaining four problems faced by Vietnamese extension personnel who express with lower percentages of respondents were low education of farmers (8%); poor support from local government/organizations (15%); overloaded works (15%) and lack of experiences (17%).

CONCLUSIONS

The study found that almost Vietnamese as well as Indian extension personnel have not enough main facilities, especially, the important facilities like telephone, computer and internet for operating their works.

The findings about the problems faced in every day extension works for Vietnamese extension personnel, there were more problems faced than those of Indian extension personnel (12 problems as compared to 7). It is observed that there were four problems, which were relatively similar to the problems faced by Indian extension personnel *i.e.*, lack of trainings, lack of transportations, lack of information facilities and lack of funds and these problems were revealed by 32; 10; 25 and 35 per cent of respondents, respectively. The remaining eight problems, in which most important was lack of training facilities (77%). The second and third important problems faced (57 and 43 % of respondents) were low incomes and economic problems of the families of extension personnel. The relatively important problem was due to lack of transportation (33%). The remaining four problems faced were low education of farmers (8%); poor support from local government/organizations (15%); overloaded works (15%) and lack of experiences (17%).

In case of India, the study found that there were total seven problems being faced in every day carrying out extension work. Majority of them expressed that they are facing the problem of lack of departmental transportations (50%). The second most importance problem faced as perceived by them was lack of supporting staffs. The third problem faced was the lack of training (37% of extension personnel). The fourth problem (revealed by 30%) was the lack of information facilities. The fifth problem (as perceived by 27%) was the lack of fund. Two other problems, as expressed by fewer percentages of respondents were lack of farmers' activities and working procedures (6 and 8 %, respectively).

From the findings of the study, it is imperative to call for attention from government, policy makers, and planners to supply necessary facilities such as telephone, transportation, computer, internet, etc... This would help extension personnel improve working conditions and design effective policy/strategy. That would help them overcome the above problems, which in turn, result in promoting agricultural production and export.

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Những vấn đề phải đương đầu của cán bộ khuyến nông – một số phân tích, so sánh giữa Việt Nam và Ấn Độ

Nỗ lực của nghiên cứu này là tìm ra những vấn đề khó khăn phải đương đầu của cán bộ khuyến nông trong công việc hàng ngày của họ ở những vùng sản xuất và xuất khẩu lúa gạo chính của hai nước Việt Nam và Ấn Độ. Thông qua việc phân tích và so sánh ở hai nước, tác giả đề nghị một số giải pháp để khắc phục những khó khăn trở ngại trong công tác của cán bộ khuyến nông. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy rằng, đối với cán bộ khuyến nông của Việt Nam, họ phải đương đầu nhiều khó khăn hơn so với cán bộ khuyến nông của Ấn Độ (12 vấn đề so với 7); trong đó, có 4 vấn đề cán bộ khuyến nông Việt Nam phải đương đầu tương tự như ở Ấn Độ, đó là huấn luyện chưa đầy đủ, thiếu phương tiện đi lại và vận chuyển chung, thiếu thông tin và thiếu kinh phí hoạt động. Tám vấn đề còn lại sắp xếp từ nhiều hoặc ít nghiêm trọng, đó là thiếu các phương tiện phục vụ tập huấn, thu nhập thấp, kinh tế gia đình khó khăn, thiếu phương tiện đi lại, nông dân có trình độ giáo dục thấp, thiếu sự giúp đỡ và ủng hộ của chính quyền địa phương, công việc quá tải và thiếu kinh nghiệm. Trong trường hợp cán bộ khuyến nông Ấn Độ, có 7 vấn đề mà họ phải đương đầu trong công việc hàng ngày, đó là thiếu phương tiện vận chuyển chung, thiếu cán bộ giúp việc, thiếu đào tạo và tập huấn, thiếu các phương tiện thông tin liên lạc, thiếu kinh phí hoạt động, thiếu các hoạt động với nông dân và thiếu các quy chế làm việc. Từ kết quả nghiên cứu này các tác giả kêu gọi sự chú ý khẩn cấp của chính phủ, các tổ chức có liên quan và những nhà làm chính sách để điều chỉnh chính sách và quan tâm đầu tư thích đáng phương tiện làm việc nhằm giúp cán bộ khuyến nông khắc phục những vấn đề mà họ phải đương đầu trên đây để giúp họ làm tốt vai trò khuyến nông. Qua đó, góp phần đẩy mạnh hoạt động sản xuất và xuất khẩu nông nghiệp.