



Full Length Research

Agricultural Extension Service in Ethiopia: The role of Social System and Farmers'- Agricultural Development Agents Relationship

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Abstracts: This study was about the role of social system factors and farmer-development agent's relationship in affecting agricultural extension service the case of five selected woreda of Ilubabor Zone. The objectives of this study mainly focused on the current structure of extension system, social system factors and farmer-development agent as well as challenges pertaining agricultural extension service in the study area. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research method in the form of triangulation. Therefore, survey, in-depth interview, observation and focus group discussion method has been employed to collect information from household heads, participants and interview respondents. For this study 5 woreda which can be representative for the whole has been purposively selected. Then, 3 kebele has been selected for information using simple random sampling technique. Finally, 350 households were selected from selected area for survey questionnaire by using systematic sampling technique. On the other hand, in-depth interview and FGD were conducted with purposively selected local community members and experts in the Woreda. The finding of the study revealed that, agricultural extension approach of the study area governed under direct supervision of regional level structure, the lower level structure has limited power and resource in extension service program. Furthermore, social system factors like social norms, gender role, religion and opinion leadership role have tremendous impact on agricultural extension service provision in the study area. Again, as the finding of this study indicated, there is no good relationship between farmers and development agents. Along with the challenges of agricultural extension service, problem like, staff turnover, skill gap, false report, ethical misconduct and budget constraint are few among many detrimental factors to extension service program in the study area.

Keywords: Extension Service: Farmer Development: Agent Relationship: Social System

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1.0 Introduction of the Study

In most agrarian society especially in developing countries, agriculture is the major livelihood strategy of large numbers of populations. It is also only through the growth of agricultural sector that those countries can enhance or stimulate the growth of other sectors in forward linkage with activities such as processing and transportation (UN, 2008). Agricultural extension program is therefore, activities that performed by different sectors to improve the agricultural system of rural households (Kassa, 2003). To reduce poverty and ensure food security, government of Ethiopia has been introduced a series of poverty reduction strategies. Sustainable development and poverty reduction program (SDPRP) introduced in 2002 was the first poverty reduction program. The strategy rooted in rural based and agricultural growth and it emphasized on the area like, increased provision of agricultural extension services, Training of extension agents (DAs) at TVET, Training of farmers in various productivity enhancing techniques (MOA, 2012)

Studies shows that, activities such as, provision of input credit, institutional linkages with rural development committees, systematic inclusion of women and the young, packages in food crops, livestock sector, post-harvest activities and natural resource utilization and conservation, artificial fertilizer and improved seeds have been adopted by Ethiopian peasants over the past decade to improve extension service in Ethiopia (Carlsson et al, 2005, ATA, 2017). There are also many detrimental factors are affecting agricultural extension system in our country. As studies shown, the extension system of the country is top-down and not participatory, low capacity experts and development agent with low level of morale and high turnover rate of extension agent staff. Beside to this shortage of operation budget facilities are also the other problems that affect extension service provision in Ethiopia (Brhianu et al 2006, Tigist et al 2017, Abeje, 2009).

Today, the role of extension program goes beyond technology transfer to facilitation; beyond training to learning, and includes assisting farmer groups to form, dealing with diverse area of activities. Likewise, problems pertaining to agricultural extension service program are also not only attributed to technological and agro-ecological factors, whereas, socio-economic aspect of the society also plays paramount role in affecting it. Therefore, having this in mind, this study goes beyond technology transfer to fill the gap that social system factors and farmer-development agent's relationship roles in improving or affecting agricultural extension service provision that given to local community, focusing on five selected woredas of Illuababor zone.

Having the ultimate objective of assessing the role of social system and farmer-development agent relationship in improving agricultural extension service, This study aimed at addressing the following specific objectives:

- To assess the current structure of agricultural extension service in the study area
- To examine compatibility of social system with agricultural extension service in the study area
- To investigate the interaction process between extension workers and farming community of the study area
- To assess major hindering factors of agricultural extension service in improving rural community lives of the study area

2.0 Scope of the Study

Geographically, the scope of the study is delimited to five selected weredas of Ilubabor Zone. Ilubabor zone is one (1) among twenty (20) zonal level administrations of Oromia regional state, situated in southwestern part of Ethiopia. It has thirteen (13) rural weredas and one (1) B level town. Ilubabor zone is bounded by East Wellega and Buno-Bedele zones in the east. Iluu Abba Bora also shares a border with West and East Wellega in the North; SNNPR in the south, and Gambella Regional State in the west. Geographically, Ilubabor zone is located between 3o24'20"- 10° 23'26"N latitudes and 34° 07'37 42°58'51"E longitudes (*See Annex: I to the*

Current map of the Zone). The total area of the Region is 999,625 km², among this land that covered by forest account 408,099 hector land, on the other hand agricultural land consist 328,200. Savanna land grazing land accounts 20,171.8 and 30,900.9 hector of land respectively.

Based on the recent estimation, the zone has an estimated total population of 933,325, of which 466,394 are men and 466,931 women. The population density is 84.02. The two largest ethnic groups reported in Illubabor are the Oromo (89.67%) and the Amhara (7.37%); all other ethnic groups made up 2.96% of the population. Oromiffa was spoken as a first language by 90.68% and 7.08% spoke Amharic; the remaining 2.24% spoke all other primary languages reported. The majority of the inhabitants are Muslim, with 50.6% of the population having reported they practiced that belief, while 26.51% of the population practiced Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity and 22.51% professed Protestantism and others.

Agro-ecological zone is fall in 95% under high land (*badda*) and the remaining 5% is lowland (*Gammoojji*). The mean annual temperature of the woreda is 18⁰c up to 43⁰c and the mean annual rainfall is from 1150mm-2200mm per year. It is unimodal type of rainfall that increases in May to October and decreases in December. Regarding the topographic location, most part of the Zonal level land is Mountains and some parts of the area covered by rift valleys. Ilubabor zone is located in 1700 meter above sea level. In terms of issue, the current study uncovered the current structures of agricultural extension works, its reciprocal impact with social factors, factors that hindered its efficient practice and interaction between agricultural development agents and the farming community.

3.0 Research Methods

A cross-sectional study design was used to uncover issues related to, the role of social system and farmer-extension worker relationship in improving agricultural extension services in five selected woreda of Illubabor. For this study, the researchers selected five woredas of Illubabor zone namely, Bure, Nopa, Gore, Hurumu and Yayo and collected data at one time. The purposive selection of these woreda's enables the researcher to get deep and detail information issue pertaining with agricultural extension services and its problems. A mixed approach was employed in this study. Quantitative approach, sample survey method was used to collect data from small holder farmers. A qualitative approach was deployed and produced highly detailed information from key and knowledgeable individuals through semi-structured interviews and focused group discussions. The study populations were people who are living in five Words of Ilubabor Zone. Household heads of small holder farmers in the selected five Woredas were respondents for the survey. Additionally, the study incorporated other people who had relevance related with the issue under study. For instance, farmers, wereda and kebele level administrative staffs, community leaders, and extension workers have participated in the qualitative data collection process. Sample size was calculated using a single population proportion formula designated as $n = \frac{Z^2 \alpha/2 p(1-p)}{d^2}$ based on the assumptions of P-value=0.25 which was the proportion of among youths in Ilubabor zone [19], a 95% confidence level, 4% margin of error (d) and 10% non-response rate. Accordingly, the total sample size calculated was 350. Five woredas were purposively selected from twelve woredas of Ilubabor zone. The total sample size was proportionally allocated to each woreda. Then, the study participants from each woreda were selected using random sampling technique. While small holder farmers' households' and extension workers of the selected woredas during data collection period were included, households and extension workers outside of the five selected woredas of Ilubabor zone were excluded. Household survey was used to obtain information about the issue pertaining to the agricultural extension service of the study area. Pre-coded questionnaire was prepared and directly administered by the researcher and enumerator through using local language. Accordingly, sample household head and development agents were selected using sample size determination to fill the prepared questionnaire. Moreover, semi-structured interview was employed to supplement the ideas and question designed in the household survey. Accordingly, respondents for in-depth interview and key informants have been selected from local community member, development agents (DA's) and other administrative member based on the purposive selection of the researcher. Furthermore, focus group discussions in each selected kebeles of the

research site have been conducted by the researchers. The discussion was carried out with diverse member of local community composed of diverse age, sex and their respective status. The group were contains individual from eight to twelve and chance was given to each and every individual during the discussion. The quantitative data collected using survey instrument (questionnaire) was coded before its entry for analysis. Then, it was analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. While using SPSS, descriptive statistics was done. Then, both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed and presented concurrently.

4.0 Results and Discussions

In this chapter, primary data collected through survey, in-depth interview, and focus group discussion was analyzed, interpreted and presented. Accordingly, the findings of the study were discussed alongside with the specific objectives stated under the introductory chapter. Consequently, various sections and sub-sections were produced to incorporate all the relevant information collected from the field through the aforementioned methods. This chapter contains four major sections. The first section mainly focuses on the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of respondents, these includes age, sex, family size, land holding size and place of residence of households in the study area. The second section focuses on the structures of agricultural extension service in the study area. On the other hands, the third and the fourth section deal with the impact of social environment on agricultural extension service and farmer-extension worker relationship. The last and final section of this chapter deals with major a challenge that affects agricultural extension service in the study area.

4.1 Socio-Demographic and Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

This sub-section of the study presents the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of respondents. Therefore, the following table summarizes the socio-economic characteristics of sample respondents as follows. As shown in the below table, 350 households were participated on the survey. Among this 85.1% of them were male- headed households and the remaining 14.9% of respondents were women- headed households. Regarding their age categories, the majority (55.3%) of the respondents fall under the age group of 31-40 years old. About 18.7% of respondents were in 20-30 age group. On the other hand, 15.2% of respondents were fall under the age group of 41-50 years old. The remaining 10.8% of respondents were above 51 years old.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic and Economic Characteristics of Respondents

| Variables | Respondent R=350 | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------|
| | | Percentage (%) | Mean (X̄) |
| Sex | Male | 85.1 | |
| | Female | 14.9 | |
| | Total | 100 | |
| Age | 20-30 | 18.7 | 37.2 |
| | 31-40 | 55.3 | |
| | 41-50 | 15.2 | |
| | >51 | 10.8 | |
| | Total | 100 | |
| Educational status | Can't write and read | 81.2 | |
| | Primary school | 16.1 | |
| | Secondary school | 2.7 | |
| | TVET or diploma | - | |
| | University degree | - | |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|------|------|
| | Total | 100 | |
| Ethnicity | Oromo | 78.6 | |
| | Amhara | 13.3 | |
| | Tagaru | 4.2 | |
| | Other | 3.9 | |
| land holding size | < 0.5 hector | 9.3 | 1.68 |
| | 0.6-1.00h | 40.7 | |
| | 1.1-1.5h | 29.6 | |
| | 1.6-2.00h | 14.2 | |
| | 2.1h above | 6.2 | |
| | Total | | |
| Household assets | Land | 88 | |
| | Livestock | 62 | |
| Access years of Extension service | 0-2 years | 12.4 | 3.78 |
| | 3-4 years | 24.6 | |
| | 5-6 years | 55.2 | |
| | >6 years | 7.8 | |
| | Total | 100 | |

Source: Own Survey (2019)

Regarding respondents educational status, majority of them (81.2%) cannot read and write while, 16.1 of them attended primary education. The rest, 2.7% of respondent were attended secondary and above education. This shows that, majority of respondent's did not get formal education, which directly associated with low usage of extension service and modern agricultural practice. With regard to ethnicity the majority (78.6%) of the respondents were from Oromo ethnic group which was followed by respondents affiliated with Amhara ethnic group which shares 13.2% from the total sample and the remaining 4.2% and 3% of them were Tageru and others. The household survey data revealed that, more than 95% of the total population in the study area have land that used for agriculture. Accordingly the household survey result indicated that, 40.7% of respondent possess between 0.6-1.0 land size in hectares, and 29.6% of the respondents possess between above 1.1-1.5 land size in hectars. The remaining 14.2%, 9.3 and 6.8% of respondent possess between 1.6-2.00, <0.5 and >2.1 land sizes in hectares respectively. The average land holding size in the study area is 1.78 hectares per household. Household assets are mainly drives from land and livestock. In the study area the livelihood strategies of local community mainly depends on, crop production, livestock raring, and forest product (honey, timber extraction, charcoal etc). Results in Table 4.1 show that 55.2% of respondents have been using extension service for 5-6 years; 24.6% had been accessing extension service for 3-4 years; 12.4% of them have been into extension service for 0-2 years. The remaining 7.8% of the respondents have been into extension service for >7 years and above. The mean number of years into extension service by the respondents is 3.7 years. This result reveals that farmer's years spent in extension as a user is low; most of it gained in the last 10 years since the introduction of the new package approach.

4.2 Structure of Ilubabor Zone Extension Service System

Ethiopian agricultural extension system is structured from the MoANR to the line regional Bureau of Agricultural Development (BoAD), then to the zone, *woreda*, and the lower administration unit, the *kebele*. Implementation of agricultural extension is nominally based on the decentralized administrative system in which the *woredais* supposed to play the key role. However, in fact the region continues to play a central role. Particularly, the regional BoAD takes the upper hand in planning, budget allocation, and overseeing the implementation of the agricultural extension by zones/*woredas*. Regional agricultural extension structure and function is identical to that of the MoANR. However, at regional, *woreda*, and *kebele* levels, the bureaus and

offices of agricultural development implement the agricultural extension jointly with the respective local administrations (Gerba et al, 2017).

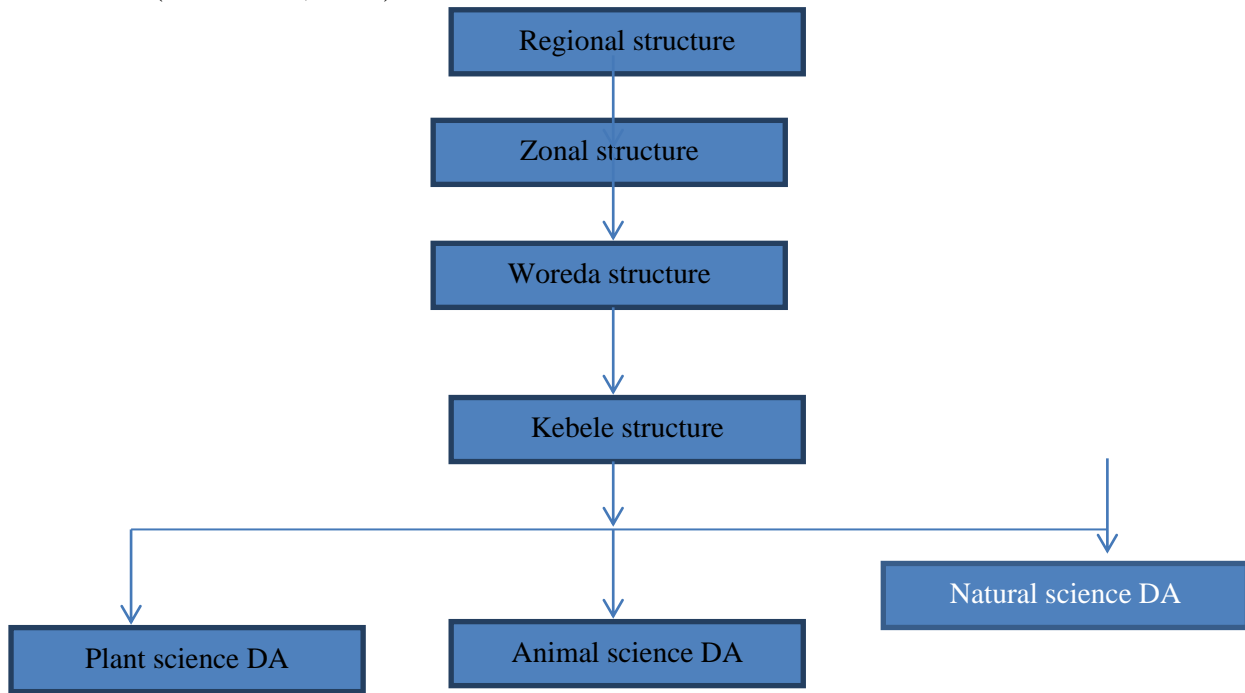


Figure 1: Operational Structure of Agricultural Extension System (Zonal Administration, 2012)

In the study area regional level BoAD structure has decentralized governance to the kebele level. Regional level extension department mainly participated in activities like technology transfer (ToT), monitoring and evaluation (M&E) the zone/woreda level activities. Moreover, BoAD is responsible for controlling Zone and woreda, develop training guideline or checklist, provision of budget and agricultural input. The zonal level extension department the second layer that plays an important role of controlling and compromising the grassroots level activities and upper level planning system respectively. In the study area the zonal level extension department mainly responsible for activities like, transferring country level development plan to the lower level structure, link the regional and woreda level extension department to implement nationwide extension activities, evaluating woreda level activities, provision of technical support, collecting information and reporting it to the regional level and perform allocation of work quota to wereda level.

Woreda level extension department is the other lower level structure that is one step above kebele level structure. It mainly performs activities like controlling kebele level extension activities in supervision manner. In the study area, woreda has no independent budget for extension service; budget is directly allocated from regional bureau of BoAD. Therefore, agricultural extension system of the study area operates under the direct leadership of BoAD at regional level. Despite its lack of independent budget, woreda level extension department is participating in activities like forming and promoting farmer groups, organizing skill training, involving farmer in seasonal extension campaign and enforcing them to benefited from extension program in their village.

Kebele level extension department is the lower structure that has direct contact with development agents and farmers. At this level, the structure of agricultural extension department has three development agent's (DA's) with different field of specialization including, plant science, animal science and natural science experts. In the study area Kebele is organized under three different zones with one to five (1:5) self-help development armies. Therefore, three development agents with different field of specialization deploy in each particular kebele of the study area to create awareness and share their knowledge regarding the usage of modern agricultural

extension service to improve the livelihood strategies of local community. In sum, in the study area the structure of agricultural extension department directly controlled by the regional level BoAD in terms of budget, logistic and agricultural input. Although Participatory Extension System has been employed for agricultural extension in Ethiopia since 2010 and decision making process is centralized, region still play a central role in extension service activities.

4.3 Compatibility of Extension Service with Social System

Social system refers any social structure that affect agricultural extension service in rural setting such as, household composition, social norms, religion and other social structures that affect agricultural extension service. It is useful, therefore, to examine the main features of societies and cultures that are relevant to extension work. As different studies indicated, extension system should be compatible with social system of the specific community, unless it is not welcomed by the community member. In this regard Respondents were asked whether the existing agricultural extension service are compatible with their different social system or not and the following table summarized it as follow.

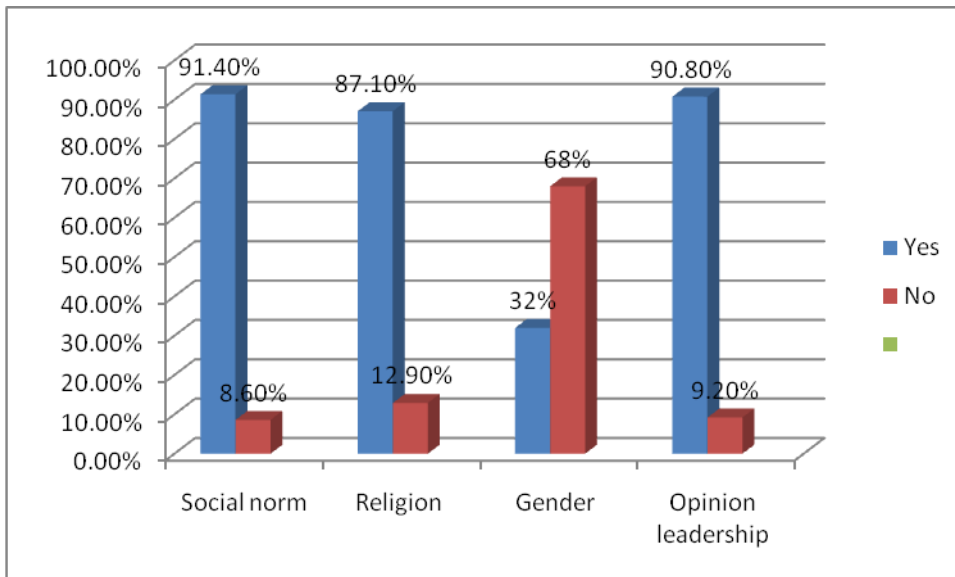


Figure 2: Respondents View on Compatibility of Extension Service with Social System
 Source: Own Survey Result (2019)

As it shown in the above figure, from the total sample households, the majority (91.4%) of respondents responded, extension service activities are more compatible with the existing social norms. Whereas. Only (8.6%) of household answered, there is no compatibility of extension service with the existing social norms. Social norm means established behavioral pattern for the member of social system that govern the day to day activities of group member in a given society. In the study area, extension delivery system is compatible with the rules and regulation of local community. But, as some respondent said, in some case there is a clash between extension service and social norms when the new idea violates the normative rules and regulation of local community. For example, the introduction of new improved seed initially violates the conventional farming system of local setting until it considered as normal.

Regarding religion, majority (87.1%) of respondents responded, extension service activities are compatible with their religious affiliation. whereas, (12.9%) of sample respondent on the other hand answered, there is incompatibility of extension service with their religious teaching. Members of religious groups have common beliefs and attitudes, and these may influence their willingness to work closely with people of other religions. Some religions impose patterns of behavior which may affect extension. Among the study area Christian

religion followers certain times of day, particular days of the week or seasons of the year may be devoted to religious a ceremony, which means that farmers are not available for farm work or for extension activities. Moreover, on these days agricultural activities are strictly forbidden to undertake. Still, according to some respondent, some technological innovation or improved seeds are against the teaching of their religion and they refused to accept it.

With regard to compatibility of extension service with gender, majority (68%) of respondents responded, extension service activities are incompatible with gender, it is biased towards male. Whereas, the remaining (32%) of sample respondent on the other hand answered, there is compatibility of extension service with gender in the study area. In fact in most part of the study site male take the lion share as household head and women role as household head is rare. Therefore, agricultural extension often concentrates on men, with male extension agents visiting male farmers; the participation of women in extension service is lesser. Literature also indicated, any change in the way people farm will also affect the women, and thus may well fail unless extension agents involve women in their programs.

Regarding the role of opinion leadership in impeding extension service household sample survey result indicated that, (90.8%) of respondents responded, extension service activities are compatible with idea of opinion leaders. whereas, the remaining (9.2%) of sample respondent on the other hand answered, there is no compatibility of extension service with the idea of opinion leaders. As key informant said, the compatibility of agricultural extension service with the interest of opinion leaders depends on the personality of those people in the position to represent locals. Some members of opinion leaders are conservative and barriers to change, while the others have cosmopolitans experience and open to welcome change freely. Generally, even though their nature and degree of impact varies, there are a lot of social system factors are affecting the extension service in the study area. Therefore, it is unthinkable to imagine change in rural setting without taking the issue of social system in to account.

4.4 Farmer-Extension Worker Relationship

Farmer-extension worker relationship is one of the important ingredients for the effective delivery of agricultural extension service. The whole extension process is depending upon the hands of development agents and their relationship with local community. In case if there's no smooth relationship between farmers and development agent, DA's are not able to respond to a given situation and function effectively, it does not matter how imaginative the extension approach is or how impressive the supply of inputs and resources for agricultural work extension work. Indeed, the effectiveness of the extension agent can often determine the success or failure of their relationship with local community and extension program.

Farmer and extension worker relationship begins through following certain steps to create good communication and understanding between both parties. As key informant indicated, in the study area creating good relationship and familiarizing development agent with farmer follow certain sequence. In the process there should be certain pre-condition that woreda level extension coordinator works a long side kebele level department to communicate farmer with extension workers. As Bureworeda key informant stated, *“initially, we give awareness for new extension workers about the life style and social system structure of local people at kebele level management. The kebele level management meets twice a week, Tuesday and Friday. Once we aware them, we let them to communicate farmers physically.* (Filed interview, Feb, 2020). Although, awaring development agent about the local setting is the first step in creating good relationship between farmer and development agent, in the study area the process is more principal than practical as the researcher proved it from development agents. Regarding development agent's overall performance respondents were asked their perception and the following it as follow.

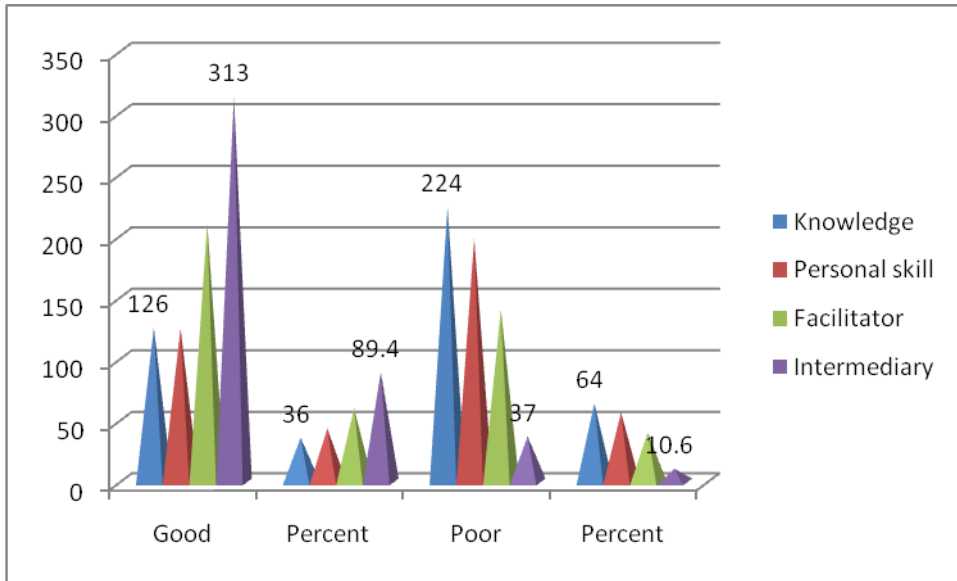


Figure 3: Farmers' Perception on Development Agent's Activities
 Source: Own Survey Result (2020)

As it shown in the above figure, from the total sample households, the majority (64%) of respondents answered, they have no good perception regarding the knowledge of development agents. whereas, (36%) of household on the other hand answered that, they have good perception on the extension service delivery by development agents. As key informant indicated, In terms of job efficiency, development agent has lesser capacity. Regarding, knowledge about extension practice they are also not up to dated. Technically, development agent has lesser knowledge about professional quality. Moreover, they have low knowledge and understanding of rural life, less familiar with government and institutional policy and main approach to adult education as the extension service is mainly operated in rural setting where adults are predominant targeted. Regarding personal skill, majority (56.1%) of respondents responded, development agents have poor personal skill. whereas, (43.4%) of sample respondent on the other hand answered that, there is development agents have relatively good Personal skill. As key informant mentioned, communication skill of development agent with local is less as they spend much of their in the nearby town and it is difficult to get them in office when needed. Moreover, problem of organizing and planning extension work activities, leadership quality and self-guidance in the absence of supervisor is what most personal skill problem of development agents.

With regard to facilitating capacity of extension workers majority (60%) of respondents responded, development agents have good facilitating role. whereas, (40%) of sample respondent on the other hand answered that, and the role of development agent is lesser in facilitating process. On the other hands, majority of sample respondent perceive that development agent's paly good intermediary role in extension service delivery and only few amounts of them downplay their role as poor. In fact, facilitating and intermediating process not require additional effort by development agents, it is part of their daily duty. Linking farmer with different government structure are one the main facilitating and intermediary role that development agent plays as an extension workers. The other factor that indicates the relationship between farmers and development agent is participation of farmer as a stakeholder in the extension service activities. In this regard household sample respondents were asked whether their participation in extension service activities is adequate or not and the following table summarize their response as follow.

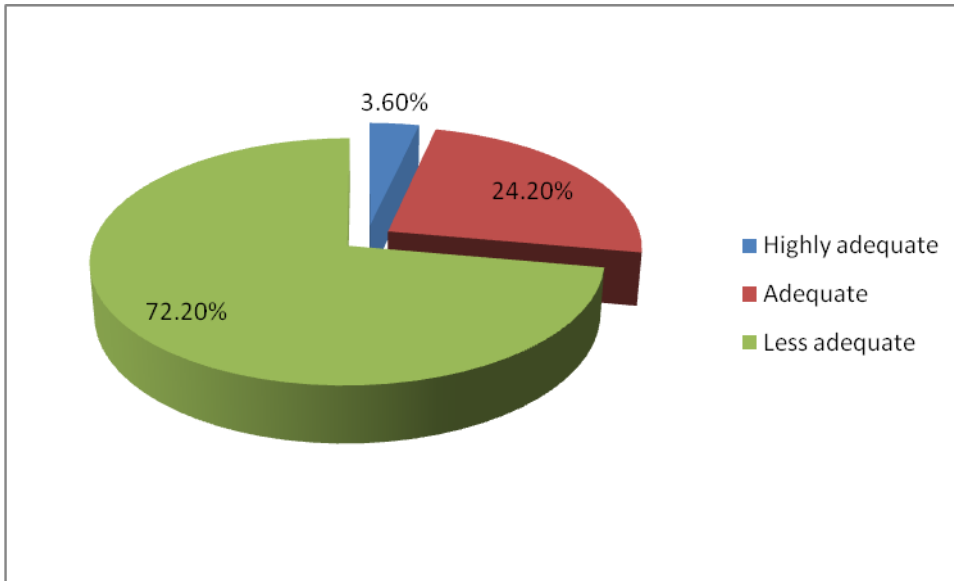


Figure 4: Farmers' Participation in Extension Service Activities as Stakeholder
Source: Own Survey Result (Feb, 2020)

As the above figure indicated, from the sample of total households, the majority (72.2%) of respondents answered that, they have less adequate participation in extension service activities. whereas, (24.2%) of household on the other hand answered that, they are relatively adequate participation in some extension discussion and decision making process. The last only few,(3.6) are responded they highly adequate participation in different decision making and installing development project in their area. As key informant told the researcher, the less participation of farmer arise from two main factors. He said *“the top-down approach of the extension service system is one of the main problem that neglect farmer participation in extension system and the other one is perceiving farmer as passive, lack of knowledge and skill to choose the best alternative for themselves.* (Filed interview, Feb, 2020).In fact, agricultural extension service in our country is not decentralized as the region directly control and evaluate the lower level structure activities, the centralized process in turn, make farmers as passive recipient instead of active agent in extension service delivery process.

4.5 Challenges of Extension Service

In the study area, even though attempt has been made to deliver extension system, there are a lot of factors are affecting agricultural extension service. Most of agricultural extension service challenges have persistently rolled over from regime to regime and year to year (Gerba et al., 2017). As the finding of the study shows there are many challenges are affecting the extension service in the study area including, budget constraint, service provision problem, false report and ethical misconduct etc, which will be presented in the following sections.

4.6 Budget Constraint

Financial resource play paramount role to accomplish any task at hands. Therefore, without smooth flow of finance it is unthinkable to undertake any institutional and filed related activities in agricultural extension service. In the study area, the financial system is top-down which Woreda level department of agricultural extension service structure has no budget of its own to directly undertake different activities. It is up to regional level structure to fund the lower level structure in the top-down approach. As key informant at woreda level indicated, centralized way of allocating and controlling extension service budget does not take in to account priority and step of intervention in specific area as it is applied for all different structure under its control. Regarding this issue one key informant said *“in our woreda, because of budget constraint FTC*

logistic material such as blackboard, table, module and other teaching material was interrupted long ago” (Filed interview, March, 2020).

Furthermore FGD discussant also added that, theoretical session is no longer operating. They are only having an access to some door to door advice and guidance twice or thrice per month. Moreover, access to improved seeds like BH661 maize seeds and fertilizer like, UREA and DAP is not affordable by farmer as there is weak credit service system, only those who can afford is getting modern improved seed and fertilizer. In support of this idea, Gerba et al., (2017) study indicated, although credit service established for resource-poor farmers to invest in, to access agricultural inputs and to conduct off-farm business. However, farmers are afraid to access loans because of high interest rates and possible debt accumulation. Therefore, the existing credit union established to help farmer is not as such satisfactory in resolving farmer access to modern improved seeds and fertilizer in the study area.

4.7 Problem of Service Provision/Service Provision Gap/Human Resource Related Issues

In the study area the major problem of service provision are development agent’s level of competency and staff turnover. Competency means the knowledge and skill level of development agent in delivering good extension service and make impact on the livelihood of local people. In this regard, FGD’s discussant depicted, one or two development agent in one particular kebele have knowledge and skill gap on their field of specialization including, plant science, animal, science and natural science. They are not up to date, focus on their own particular issue and less interest to reach farmer in a daily bases. Furthermore, there is no coordination between subject matter specialists (SMS) to work in collaboration and mitigate problem in a joint manner. Therefore, DA’s skill gap and lack of coordination have tremendous impact on agricultural extension service provision in the study area.

Staff turnover is the other factor that affects agricultural extension service provision in the study area. As key informant from Darimuworeda indicated, at least five in one person per year quit their job for free due to lack of interest, promotion and appropriate incentives for this work. Moreover, staff turnover also arise from lack of accessing sufficient goods and service in the work area and remoteness of the work place from town. Woreda level key informant stated that *“This year we lost five senior staff member through promotion, resignation and discipline. Other two staff members’ also missed from their duty for the last three week without any report and notification for their where about* (Filed interview, March, 2020). The above data indicated extension work is the last option for development agents as work profession. Staff turnover affects extension service provision as it takes a certain period of time to replace the missed staff member by others.

4.8 Ethical Misconduct and Reporting Frauds

Another problem that affects agricultural extension service in the study area is development agent’s false report and ethical misconduct. Problem related to false report is one of the major problems that extension service system of the country in general and Ilubabor zone in particular is faced. As kebele level extension expert says, most of the time development agents are not in their duty station to undertake their routine activities. They spent much of their time in nearby town and cook false report for daily, weekly monthly and even quarter report as well as follow-up check list. The major reason that aggravates the problem of false report is lack of strict supervision and low interest among extension workers. The weak supervision system is mainly comes from the top-down structure of the extension system.

Ethical misconduct is another problem that affects extension service delivery in the study are. It is the result of lack of interest and recklessness of extension worker. As per kebel level key informant stated, alcohol, drug and other toxic substances are used by extension worker in the work place. Those workers whom vulnerable to

such substance are not perform their duty in appropriate manner; have poor communication with their clients and supervisor and also less visit to their office and farmers. The key informant from Burewoderakebele level department says “*this year one development agent was fired by discipline for violating the ethical code of conduct form ToliChekakebele after repeated oral and written warnings.*”(Filed interview, March, 2020). Lack of happiness at work place and their own individual personality lead development agents vulnerable to substance abuse. In sum, challenges pertaining to agricultural extension service can attribute to three main factors. Personal problems (false report, ethical misconduct), technical problems (knowledge and, skill gap, staff turnover, ToT problem) and Institutional problems (budget, centralized approach extension system).

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The finding of this study indicated the structure of agricultural extension system is top-down in the means that the lower structure have direct responsibility to the higher level administration. Although the policy advocate decentralization and participatory extension approach, however extension service all over the region is funded and controlled by the top structure. As the finding of the study further indicated, there are different social system factors that affect smooth provision of extension service in the study area. Among others social norms in which a member of a given group define the rules and regulation, religion, gender variation, opinion leader’s role, all have tremendous impact on extension service provision. Therefore, knowledge about the local setting is the first step that any development agents take in to considerate before they directly enter in to taking any measures. As majority of the survey respondent indicated, there is poor communication, less knowledge transfer and not smooth relationship among farmer and development agents. Farmer accuse development agent as they have no efficiency in their service provision, not up to date and lack of skill like communication, problem of organizing and planning extension work activities, leadership quality and self-guidance in the absence of supervisor. As the finding of the study finally depicted, there are a lot of technical, personal and institutional factors are affecting the provision of agricultural extension service. Challenges like, budget constraints, lack of skill and staff turnover, false report and ethical misconduct in the work place are some of the major problems that agricultural extension service of the study area facing these days. There is a need for decentralized agricultural extension service in order to overcome problem of budget and logistic material at the lower level structure. Staff training and incentives are also important to reduce problems pertaining to staff turnover, low level of competency and their integration with the existing social norms. Moreover, creating collaboration among staff, establishing efficient controlling system to reduce problem of ethics and fraud report and strengthening linkage with all stakeholders in the area of agricultural extension service can solve the problem of agricultural extension service in the study area.

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