



Tropentag, September 20-22, 2017, Bonn

“Future Agriculture:
Socio-ecological transitions and bio-cultural shifts”

Dissemination and Communication of Scientific Forecast Information and Advisory Services to Farming Communities in Jamalpur District, Bangladesh

MST. SHARMIN AKTER, HARRO MAAT, CEES LEEUWIS

Wageningen University and Research, Dept. of Social Sciences; Knowledge, Technology and Innovation Group, The Netherlands

Abstract

This paper explores how development agencies disseminate and communicate science-based forecast information about flood and climate risks and related advisory services to farm communities. In particular we analyse dissemination approaches and ways in which development agencies interact with farmers to enhance their capacity to use forecast information. For this study we used the skilling concept, understood as a combination of social and environmental learning. With this methodology we seek to identify what kind of interactions are employed by development agencies, on what basis participants are selected, how stakeholders of different agencies interact with the farmers and how participants perceive the effectiveness of different approaches and forms of interaction about flood and climate risk management. The research was carried out in three different villages in the Jamalpur district of Bangladesh. Fieldwork in the three villages was conducted through participant observations and in-depth interviews with different concerned stakeholders and participating farmers to explore how forecast information and advisory services were disseminated and communicated by development agencies. The results make clear that there is substantial variation in dissemination methods and forms of communication among the development agencies. The intensity and frequency of interactions between agencies and farmers seemed not to matter much for the achieved skilling. In particular when different streams of information came from different sources and when participation in dissemination activities was not representative for the farm population. We conclude that a lack of adequate coordination among development agencies to disseminate and communicate similar types of forecast information and advisory services enhances the chance of communicating inconsistent information to farm community. Therefore, we suggest that agencies reconsider effective learning strategies, most prominently by evaluating linkages and coordination between agencies to disseminate and to communicate consistent forecast information and advisory services.

Keywords: Advisory services, Bangladesh, communication, dissemination, scientific forecast information

Contact Address: Mst. Sharmin Akter, Wageningen University and Research, Dept. of Social Sciences; Knowledge, Technology and Innovation Group, Hollandseweg 1 Gebouw 201, 6706 KN Wageningen, The Netherlands, e-mail: sharmin.akter@wur.nl