Chapter 5

The Key Role of Integral Extension in Socio-Environmental Innovation towards Sustainable Rural Development

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Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.69454

Abstract

In Mexico, traditional extension models have been linear, also they lack orientation towards the demands of the producers and the demands of the markets, the approach has been in general paternalistic and the attention is by individual producers. These extension models have not been sufficiently effective in promoting and adopting socio-environmental innovations to create value along the supply chain. The principal purpose of this chapter is to understand, on the one hand, the elements of a novel integral extension model, and on the other hand, its key role in socio-environmental innovation for contributing to achieve sustainable development in rural areas in Mexico. The integral extension model proposes the participation of extension workers as facilitators of the learning process to orient the change of attitudes and behaviors of local/regional actors, carrying out the socio-technical-environmental support to producers throughout the value chain perspective. Also, traditional and science-based knowledge need to interact synergistically ensuring that further value is added to traditional knowledge of local producers. In conclusion, integral extension system plays a crucial role in the implementation of strategies for sustainable rural development in Mexico because it promotes models of interactions among local/regional actors consistently with future as well as present needs.

Keywords: extension systems, value chain, socio environmental innovation, rural development

1. Introduction

Extension has been defined as a system aimed at facilitating producers, their organizations and other market actors, access to knowledge, information and technologies [1]. The extension is