



Answer Writing - Agriculture extensions



Q.1) Describe some of the extension methods which are commonly used by extension professionals in India.

Ans.

Agricultural extension is the process through which new information and scientific research are applied to agricultural practises by educating farmers. Agricultural extension uses expert non-formal teaching strategies with the goal of changing people's behaviour. Raising their output and productivity to boost their revenue as farmers. Forming strong connections with research to address issues facing farmers and guaranteeing enough and timely input delivery and use of tested communication techniques for accelerating the innovative acceptance and diffusion process.

1. Farm & home visit:
 - Farm & home visit constitutes the direct or face-to-face contact by an extension professional with the farmer or the members of his family.
 - During these visits, information is exchanged or discussed. The visits may be to get acquainted with the problems of the farmers. Such visits provide an opportunity for a two-way communication.
2. Result demonstration:
 - Result demonstration is meant for proving the advantages of recommended practices and to demonstrate their applicability to the local conditions.
 - It is conducted by a farmer under the direct supervision of an extension professional. It is designed to teach others, in addition to the person who conducts the demonstration. It helps the farmers to learn by seeing & doing. This method can be used to show the superiority of practices, such as dahi culture, value addition, hygienic handling of animals, etc.
3. Group discussion:
 - All the farmers cannot be contacted by extension professionals individually because of their large number. It is convenient & feasible to contact them in groups.
 - This method is commonly known as group discussion. It is used to encourage & stimulate the people to learn more about the problems that concern the community through discussion.
 - It is a good method of involving the local people in developing local leadership & in deciding on a plan of action in a democratic way.
4. Exhibition:
 - An exhibition is a systematic display of information, actual specimens, models, posters, photographs, and charts, etc. in a logical sequence.
 - It is organized for arousing the interest of the clientele in the things displayed. It is one of the best media for reaching a large number of people, especially illiterate & semi-literate people.
 - Exhibitions are used for a wide range of topics, such as planning a model village, showing high-yielding breeds of cattle and buffaloes, new agricultural implements and the best products of village industries.
5. Field tour:
 - Conducted tours for farmers are used to convince them and to provide them with an opportunity of seeing the results of new practices and products, skills, etc. and to give them an idea regarding the suitability & application of these things in their own area.

- Such tours may also be arranged to enable the rural people to visit places & institutions (connected with the problems of rural life), such as research institutions, training institutions, agricultural universities, model villages, areas of advanced developments, leading private farms, exhibitions, and agricultural & cattle fairs/dairy mela.

Conclusion:

Agricultural extension is taking a new dimension because of a global movement for reforming the national extension systems in developing countries that started late in the twentieth century. Agriculture extension can be viewed as an educational programme to be undertaken by public agencies to activate the process of transferring knowledge, science and technology from laboratories to people or farmer and to help them in farm planning, decision making, record keeping, use of inputs, storage, processing and marketing, ensure supplies and services, increase their production, develop people and their leaders, improve their occupation, family, and community life.

Q.2) While highlighting the main objectives of Agricultural Extension, discuss the challenges to Agricultural Extension and suggest the remedial solutions.

Ans.

According to the Committee for Doubling Farmers' Income, "Agricultural Extension is an empowering system of sharing information, knowledge, technology, skills, risk & farm management practices, across agricultural sub-sectors, all along the agricultural value chain, to enable the farmers to realize higher net income from their enterprise on a sustainable basis". The important objectives of Agricultural Extension are:

1. To transmit the latest technical knowledge to farmers.
2. To provide feedback from farmers to extension officers / scientists on problems and constraints in agriculture.
3. To enhance professional competence of extension functionaries.
4. To strengthen linkage amongst farmers, extension officers and researchers.
5. To motivate farmers for overall development.

Despite good penetration in rural, the Agricultural Extension have been affected by following challenges:

Misinformation and Influence of private input dealers:

- Public extension provides advisory services, whereas input supply is controlled by private sector, this duality in delivery of services also creates confusion, despite right advice by public extension, farmers purchase wrong inputs influenced by aggressive sale by private input dealers.

Exclusion of extension support:

- To make the weather forecasting information system as a part of extension services more effective, the information needs to be combined and provided with other environmental information such as ground cover, soil type, soil organic matter, soil radiation, soil temperature, soil moisture and long-term drought conditions.

Poor Cooperation between agencies:

- While NGO-led extension models offer far more variety and display sensitivity to local priorities and conditions, they do not have the capacity or scale to make a significant impact across large regions.

Missing accountability:

- The large number of players in the agriculture extension arena function without any standards or certification of Quality.
- This leaves questions of accountability up in the air as the majority of farmers are not in a position to pursue legal remedies in case of erroneous or even harmful advice.

Some of the suggestions are:

Better linkages:

- Formal mechanisms for greater sharing of knowledge, not just between research centres and service providers but also between farmers and the service providers will have to be activated with special focus on animal husbandry and dairying.

Better Institutional framework:

- The issue of the capacity of service providers, their quality certification by an independent authority and adherence to technical norms as well as accountability in different circumstances will also require clearer articulation and definition.

Cooperation:

- The links between research and extension needed more focus, which has weakened over the years after the initial euphoria of the Green Revolution. Cross sharing of experiences between the public, private and civil society sectors should be maximised.

Clarity of role:

- The role of the private sector, civil society and farmers' groups in extension needs to be urgently and specifically delineated, public led extension efforts will not suffice in an environment where the market is the primary driver of cropping patterns and choice of technology.

Thus, Innovation networks permitting free two-way flow by ideas and technologies must be designed and implemented to capture the rich data banks of local knowledge available in different parts of the country. Digital technologies have a huge role to play in achieving this goal in a cost-effective manner.

Q3. Explain in brief agricultural extension, and Describe evolution of extension system in Indian agriculture.

Ans.

- Agricultural extension efforts in India have made significant strides towards development of the agricultural sector. The report of the national commission on Agriculture (1976) has emphasized the need for massive extension efforts to modernize the outlook of the farmers and to make them more enterprising and willing to adapt readily to innovations so that agricultural production could be increased.

- It is an applied behavioural science, the knowledge of which is applied to bring farmers or people through various strategies and programme of change by applying the latest scientific and technological innovations.
- Agriculture extension education, its principles, methods and techniques are applicable not only to agriculture but also to other sciences like veterinary, animal husbandry, dairying, health and family planning etc.
- To summarize, agriculture extension viewed as an educational programme to be undertaken by public agencies to activate the process of transferring knowledge, science and technology from laboratories to people or farmer and to help them in farm planning, decision making, record keeping, use of inputs, storage, processing and marketing, ensure supplies and services, increase their production, develop people and their leaders, improve their occupation, family, and community life.

Evolution of the Extension System in Indian Agriculture

Post-independence period

- The first planned attempt started with the launching of Community Development Programme in 1952, followed by the National Extension Service in 1953.
- These programs were able to educate responsive farmers to take up improved methods of farming across the country.
- The other important Area-Based Special Programmes were; Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP, 1960), Intensive Agriculture Area Programme (IAAP, 1964) and High Yielding Varieties Programme (HYVP, 1966) besides Farmers Training Centers (1967) to train farmers on high yielding varieties and improved methods of farming to back up the above programs.
- The cumulative effect of these programs resulted in increased productivity, which made way to usher in 'Green Revolution' in Indian agriculture during late 1970s.
- The most important ones being; Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA, 1969), Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Programme (MFAL, 1969), District Rural Development Agency/Society (DRDA, 1976), Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP, 1978) and Lab to Land Programme sponsored by ICAR (LLP, 1979).
- Although, these programs were able to improve the socio-economic conditions of beneficiaries, they were isolated in a given time and implemented in a phased manner.

Training and Visit System

- This system was introduced in India in 1974 with the World Bank assistance. Training and Visit system became the dominant method of restructuring the extension services in over sixty countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- A Training and Visit (T&V) system was introduced in extension services on a pilot scale in Rajasthan in 1974 with World Bank funding support and was scaled up to several other states in 1977.
- While impressive results were documented by the studies that evaluated the T&V system, the issues related to sustainability of funding, high requirement of staffing, and the quality of staff became the key concerns.

In the 1990s:

- Agricultural extension witnessed a qualitative change in the 1990s, with a new focus on privatisation and the withdrawal of support to the state-led extension system.

- Reduced spending by government weakened the public-sector extension system. Other non-governmental agencies stepped in to fill the vacuum.

ATMA (Agricultural Technology Management Agency):

- In order to address the key constraints faced by extension system in the country with respect to reducing capacity of public extension services, its lack of decentralized and demand driven focus, the Innovations in Technology Dissemination component of National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) was implemented in seven States in the country namely, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Maharashtra and Punjab through four project districts in each State.
- This component aimed at pilot testing new institutional arrangements for technology dissemination at district level and below in order to move towards an integrated extension delivery. The project process involved adopting bottom-up planning procedures for setting the research and extension agency in order to make the technology dissemination farmer driven and farmer accountable.
- The extension delivery was oriented towards group approach catering to the location specific requirement of the farmers. Gender concerns have been given adequate emphasis under the project. It functions as a registered society at District level and serves as a focal point for integrating research and extension activities and helps in decentralizing the management of agricultural technology transfer.

Agricultural Technology Information Centres (ATIC)

- In 2000, ICAR introduced Agricultural Technology Information Centres (ATIC) in selected ICAR institutes and State Agricultural Universities to function as a single window to disseminate technologies developed in the Universities and Institutes.

Q4. Mention the mandate and activities performed by Krishi Vigyan Kendra's (KVKs);

Ans.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) is an innovative science based institution which undertakes vocational training of farmers, farm women and rural youths; conducts on farm research for technology refinement and front line demonstrations to promptly demonstrate the latest agricultural technologies to the farmers as well as the extension workers. The KVK functions on the principles of collaborative participation of scientists, subject matter experts, extension workers and farmers. "Teaching by doing" and "learning by doing" are the main methods of imparting skill training.

Mandates of KVKs:

1. Collaborate with the subject matter specialists of the state Agricultural universities/Scientists of the regional research station, NAEP and the state extension personnel in "on farm testing", refining and documenting technologies for developing region-specific sustainable land use systems.
2. Organize training to update the extension personnel within the area of operation with emerging advances in agricultural research on regular basis.
3. Organize long term vocational training courses in agriculture and allied vocations for the rural youths with emphasis on "learning by doing" for generating self-employment through institutional financing.
4. Organize front-line demonstration in various crops to generate production data and feedback information.

Based on the mandates, the following activities are performed;

- 1. On farm research:** It is adaptive research which is conducted on farmers fields by the farmers with the support from scientists/subject-matter specialists. It is conducted with a farming systems perspective
- 2. In service training:**
 - The KVKs has been given the responsibility of conducting in service training of grass route level extension workers like VEWs and others working in Government and non-Government development organizations.
 - This training programmes are normally arranged in collaboration with the state department of agriculture and state agricultural university. The importance of such training programmes has increased since the introduction of a Panchayat Raj System in the country.
- 3. Vocational training of farmers**
 - This had been the major mandate of the KVKs in the past and will continue to be so in future as well.
 - The objective is to organize long term vocation based and skill-oriented training for farmers, farm women, rural youths and school drop-outs so that they could adopt new methods of farming and increase farm income thus, the emphasis is not on crops but on vocations.
- 4. Front line demonstrations (FLD) and other extensional activities:**
 - The KVKs organize front line demonstrations which aim at demonstrating the production the potentialities of newly released and pre-released production technologies of cereals, pulses and oil seeds and farmer's fields

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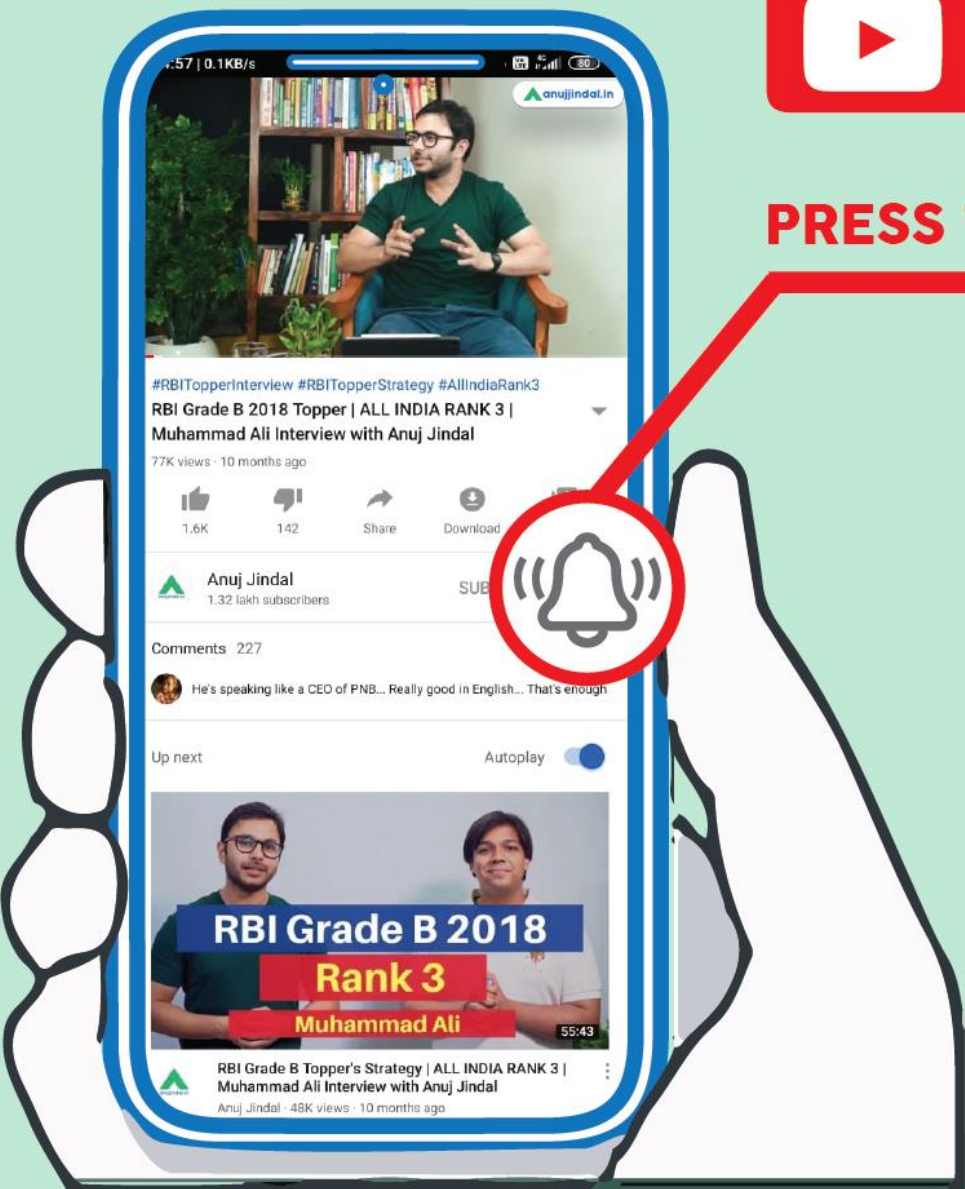
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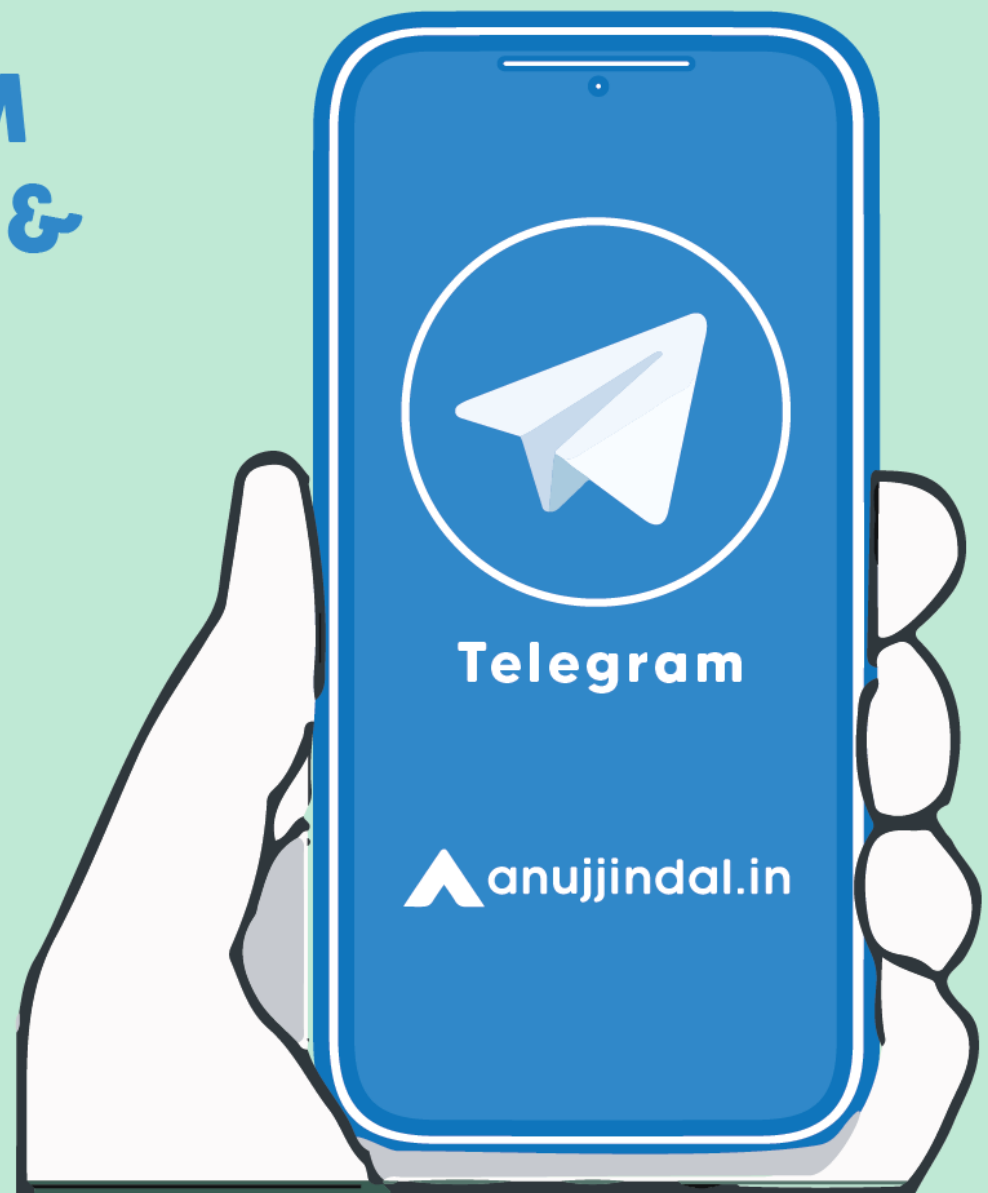
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