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Role of Agricultural Extension in Rural Development

Evangi Verma1 and Geeta Mohan2
1 Student, B.Sc. (Hons.), Faculty of Agriculture, Jagannath University, Jaipur, Rajasthan
2Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, Jagannath University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

SUMMARY

Agricultural extension is a critical driver of rural development, particularly in developing economies such as India. It facilitates the transfer of knowledge, innovation, and skills from research institutions to farmers, thereby enhancing productivity, income, and sustainability. This review synthesizes recent literature (2020–2025) and evaluates the role of extension systems alongside emerging government initiatives such as Namo Drone Didi Scheme and Digital Agriculture Mission. Evidence indicates that effective extension services can increase agricultural productivity by 20–30% and farmer income by up to 40%. The study also examines various extension methods individual, group, and mass communication and their relevance in modern agriculture. Despite advancements, challenges such as limited outreach, inadequate infrastructure, and digital divide persist. The integration of ICT tools, drones, and market platforms like e-NAM has significantly enhanced extension delivery. However, inclusivity and accessibility remain key concerns. This review highlights research gaps and suggests future directions focusing on climate-resilient and participatory extension models. Strengthening agricultural extension systems through policy support and technological innovation is essential for achieving sustainable rural development. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in Indian agricultural extension is a bottom-up approach empowering local farmers to analyze, plan, and act on their needs, shifting from top-down technology transfer to interactive, community-led development.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays a dominant role in rural economies, providing employment and livelihood to a large population. Rural development depends on increasing agricultural productivity and improving socio-economic conditions. Agricultural extension acts as a bridge between research and farmers. The concept of extension education was formalized by J. P. Leganes, and in India by Kedar Nath Singh. They emphasized education as a means to improve rural life. Today, extension systems integrate modern technologies, policies, and institutional frameworks.


Thematic Sections

1. Concept and Evolution:

Extension has evolved from

Traditional advisory services to:

- ICT-based advisory systems
- Digital platforms
- Precision agriculture tools

2. Methods of Agricultural Extension

- Individual Methods
- Farm visits
- Personal consultation
- Group Methods
- Demonstrations
- Farmer field schools
- Mass Methods
- Radio, TV
- Mobile apps

3. Role in Rural Development:

It includes technology transfer, promotes improved seed, Fertilizers, irrigation and several other indirect roles:

Productivity Enhancement:

- Increases yield by 20–30%.
- Income Generation
- Encourages diversification and market access.
- Social Development Empowers women and farmer groups.
- Sustainability
- Promotes eco-friendly farming practices

Government Schemes Supporting Extension

It includes schemes such as:

Namo Drone Didi Scheme: It is Drone-based spraying for women empowerment, precision farming, digital agriculture mission, AI-based advisory, digital farmer database for SHGs.

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana: It includes efforts irrigation efficiency and water conservation

Lakhpati Didi scheme: It is a central government initiative under the ‘ Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)’ aimed at enabling women in Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to earn a sustainable annual household income of ₹1 lakh or more.

Soil Health Card Scheme: It includes soil testing for balanced fertilizer application.

VB–G RAM G Act (2025) (replacing MGNREGA): boosts agricultural extension by linking rural jobs to farm productivity.

Key Impacts:

- Asset Creation: Builds water harvesting and soil conservation structures.
- Labor Support: Pauses public works during peak seasons to free up farm labor.
- More Work: Increases guaranteed rural employment from 100 to 125 days.
- National Mission on Agricultural Extension and Technology (NMAET): It includes training and demonstrations in rural areas using ICT based outreach and improving technology dissemination.
- PM-Kisan Scheme: It aims for direct income support through e-NAM, digital marketing platforms, kisan call center and telephonic advisory.

Critical Analysis & Discussion:

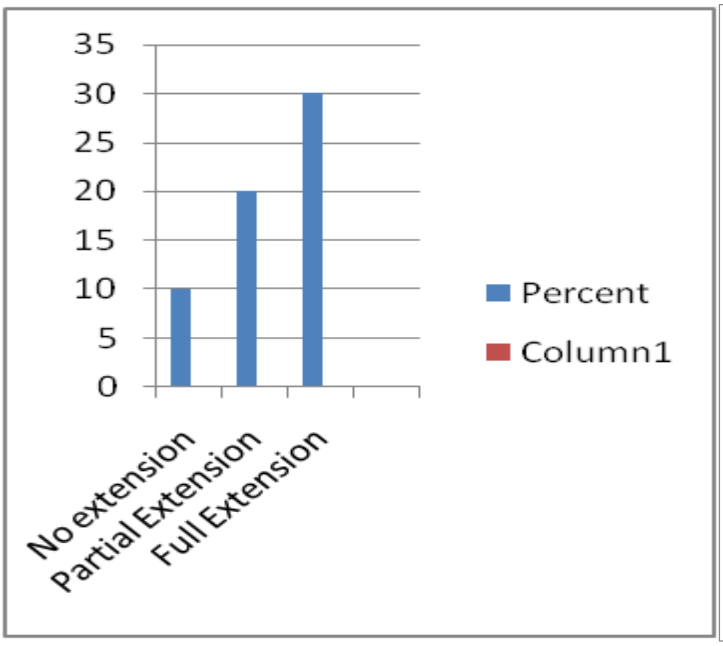
Modern schemes show a shift toward technology-driven extension. Programs like Namo Drone and Digital Agriculture improve efficiency, but digital divide limits access small farmers face adoption barriers and thereby infrastructure gaps persist.

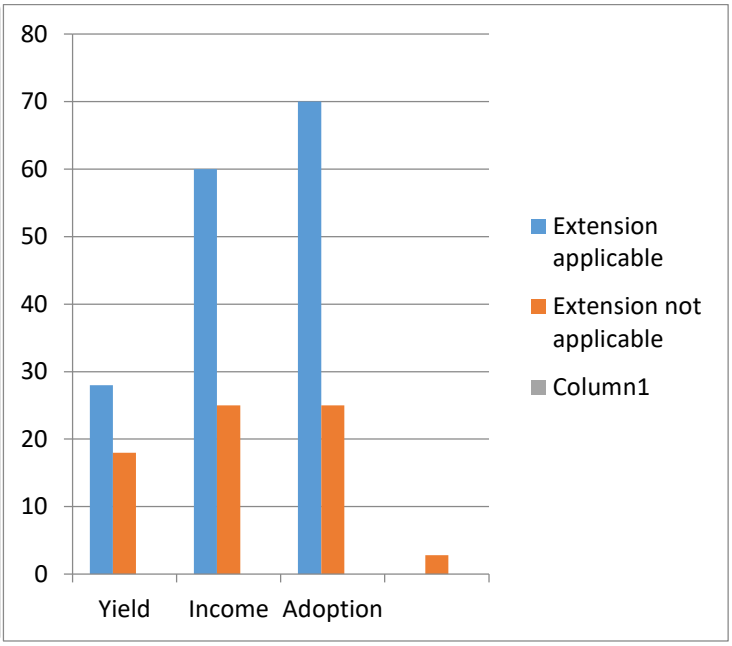
Table 1: Impact of Extension

Indicator	Extension applicable	Extension not applicable
Yield of crops	28% appox	18% appox
Income	60%	25%
Adoption	70%	25%

Table 2: Impact on Productivity

Category	Percent
No Extension	10
Partial extension	20
Extension	30





Research Institutions

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Extension Services

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Government Schemes

(Namo Drone, PMKSY, e-NAM)

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Farmers

↓

Adoption of Technology

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Rural Development

Key Insights Box

✓ Productivity increases up to 30%

✓ Income rises up to 40%

✓ Schemes enhance outreach

✓ ICT is future of extension

Practical Implications

Farmers:

Use digital tools

Adopt modern practices

Policymakers:

Invest in infrastructure

Promote inclusive extension

Future Research Directions

Climate-smart extension

Digital inclusion

Gender-focused programs

CONCLUSION

Agricultural Extension plays a vital role in strengthening rural communities by transferring knowledge, modern technologies, and improved farming practices to farmers. It helps increase agricultural productivity, improve income levels, and enhance the overall standard of living in rural areas. Through education, training, and motivation, extension services encourage farmers to adopt sustainable and scientific methods of cultivation. Agricultural extension also supports rural employment, women empowerment, skill development, and community participation.

Thus, it acts as an important bridge between research institutions and farmers, contributing significantly to agricultural growth, food security, and balanced rural development in the country.

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