



English language for agricultural majors

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Lecture 6

7-The agricultural extension



Agricultural extension is the function of providing need- and demand-based knowledge in agronomic techniques and skills to rural communities in a **systematic, participatory manner**, with the objective of improving their **production, income**, and (by **implication**) **quality of life**. Extension is essentially education and it aims to bring about positive **behavioral changes** among **farmers**.



Agricultural extension consists of: (1) the **dissemination** of **useful** and **practical information** related to agriculture, including **improved seeds**, **fertilizers**, **implements**, **pesticides**, **improved cultural practices**, and **livestock**. (2) The practical application of useful knowledge to the farm and the **household**.



Extension is an essential pillar both for rural community progress and as part of a strategy of agricultural research and development. Agricultural research remains an academic endeavor unless it is informed by **real problems on the ground** and efforts are made to deliver solutions to farmers by appropriate **forms of extension**.



Research institutions focus on the **technical aspects** for generating useful technologies, while extension focuses on the **acceptance** and **adoption** of those technologies by users. The two, **research** and **extension**, should be **functionally linked**.

Agricultural extension services can potentially be provided by three main sources: the public sector, the private non-profit sector, and the private for-profit sector. The public sector includes ministries and departments of agriculture and agricultural research centers.



The private non-profit sector includes local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, community boards and associations, bilateral and multilateral aid projects, and other non-commercial associations. The private for-profit sector consists of commercial production and marketing firms (such as input manufacturers and distributors), commercial farmers or farmer group-operated enterprises



where farmers are both users and providers of agricultural information, agro-marketing and processing firms, trade associations, and private consulting and media companies.

Countries like the United States, Canada, Australia, and Denmark, which have very **advanced agricultural sectors**, have always enjoyed strong extension services, first public, and now public and/or private.



However, this is lacking in **developing countries**. In India, the **Training & Visit System**, a **top-down, public sector-driven model of extension**, played an important role in the **Green Revolution**. However, it was not well suited for the **diverse farming system** of **rainfed areas** and proved incapable of meeting **evolving challenges**, including improving the **sustainability** of farming systems, **promoting agricultural diversification**, and **integrating** farmers into **dynamic markets**.



In many **sub-Saharan African countries**, **smallholders** are characterized by **poor adoption of technologies**, partly explained by the absence of “**smallholder-friendly**” **research findings**. Another reason is that research stations in Africa have tended to **develop** ideas with too **little attention** to **smallholder labor constraints**, to the **riskiness** of the **innovations**, to the likely availability of **inputs**, and to the presence of markets.



Addressing **new and growing challenges** in agriculture requires extension to play an expanded role with diverse objectives. New approaches to extension need to emphasize three elements: **strategies** to develop **Agricultural Innovation Systems**, **pluralism of service providers**, and extension services should be **demand-driven**.



With the changing environment of agricultural extension, institutional pluralism and **bottom-up participatory approaches** are essential. The public sector will still need to play an important role in providing agricultural extension services due to the services' public good nature, but its role needs to change in the face of the increasing role of the private and NGO sectors and new and additional responsibilities of extension services.



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Entry of actors such as the private sector and NGOs in the **delivery** of such services needs to be relaxed and the creation of innovative public-private partnerships in extension needs to be **facilitated** and promoted.



EXERCISE A.

Translate the third and fourth paragraphs in your homework notebook.

EXERCISE B.

1. Answer the following questions?
2. What is the agricultural extension?
3. What are the main two functions of agricultural extension?
4. Should the research institutions and agricultural extension join efforts together? Why?
5. Who can do agricultural extension?