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## Role of Agricultural Extension Agencies in Attaining Vision of Viksit Bharat

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### **Abstract:**

*This research paper explores the pivotal role of agricultural extension agencies in realizing the vision of "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India). It begins with an overview of the structure of the agricultural extension system in India, highlighting its multi-tiered approach that integrates government initiatives, non-governmental organizations, and private sector involvement. The paper further delves into the functions of these agencies, focusing on knowledge dissemination, capacity building, and technological transfer aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainability. By analyzing case studies and field data, the study evaluates how extension services contribute to the empowerment of farmers, fostering innovation, and improving livelihoods. Key challenges faced by these agencies, including resource limitations and a rapidly changing agricultural landscape, are also discussed. Ultimately, the research underscores the importance of strengthening agricultural extension systems as a cornerstone for achieving holistic rural development and aligning with national aspirations for a developed India. The findings and recommendations presented in this paper aim to inform policymakers and stakeholders in enhancing the effectiveness of agricultural extension services, thereby contributing to the broader goal of sustainable agricultural growth and rural prosperity.*

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**Keywords:** *Agricultural extension agency, sustainable development, Viksit Bharat.*

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### **Introduction:**

The quest for a Viksit Bharat, or developed India, underscores the need for a multifaceted approach to agricultural development, emphasizing not only economic growth but also social equity, environmental sustainability, and technological advancement. Agricultural extension agencies play a pivotal role in this transformative journey, acting as vital conduits between research institutions and farming communities. By disseminating knowledge, facilitating access to resources, and promoting best practices, these agencies empower farmers to adopt innovative techniques that enhance productivity and sustainability. This paper examines the essential functions of agricultural extension agencies in achieving the objectives outlined in the Viksit Bharat framework, including their influence on farmer education, technology adoption, and community engagement. Through an analysis of existing literature, case studies, and field observations, we highlight the successes and challenges faced by these agencies in fostering resilience and adaptation within India's agrarian landscape. Ultimately, this research aims to elucidate the strategic importance of agricultural extension services in realizing the vision of a prosperous and self-sufficient India, while offering recommendations for enhancing their effectiveness in supporting sustainable agricultural practices and rural development.

**Review of Literature:**

The agricultural extension system in India operates through a multi-tiered structure, primarily comprising government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector entities. At the national level, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) formulates policies, while state agricultural universities and extension services implement them regionally. District-level extension officers and block-level functionaries engage directly with farmers to provide tailored advice and support. Additionally, community-based organizations enhance outreach, facilitating information flow and promoting best practices in agricultural development across diverse farming communities (Pawar, 2023).

In India, agricultural extension agencies play a pivotal role in promoting agricultural sustainability by disseminating knowledge and best practices to farmers. These agencies facilitate access to innovative techniques, sustainable farming methods, and environmentally friendly technologies, thereby enhancing productivity while conserving natural resources. They also focus on training programs that emphasize climate-smart agriculture, integrated pest management, and soil health management. By bridging the gap between research and practice, these agencies empower farmers to adopt sustainable practices that ensure food security and environmental balance (Wavare et al., 2024).

Agricultural sustainability is crucial for achieving Viksit Bharat as it ensures food security, enhances rural livelihoods, and promotes environmental health. By adopting sustainable practices, farmers can improve soil fertility, conserve water, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate resilience. This holistic approach strengthens the agricultural sector, boosts rural economy, and empowers communities, ultimately fostering self-reliance. Emphasizing sustainable agriculture aligns with national goals of inclusive growth and socio-economic development (Harale & Pawar, 2024).

Interventions by agricultural extension agencies significantly enhance agricultural productivity by providing farmers with essential knowledge, resources, and support. These agencies promote modern farming practices, including the use of improved seeds, sustainable pest management, and efficient irrigation techniques. They also facilitate access to markets and financial services, empowering farmers to make informed decisions. Through tailored training and outreach programs, agricultural extension services bridge the knowledge gap, foster innovation, and ultimately drive increased yields (Pawar & Wavare, 2022).

To achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat, an increase in public expenditure on agricultural extension and research is essential. Enhanced funding will facilitate the development of innovative technologies, improve sustainable farming practices, and equip farmers with necessary skills and knowledge. By investing in robust agricultural support systems, we can elevate productivity, ensure food security, and promote rural development. This strategic investment is crucial for empowering farmers, fostering resilience against climate change, and driving economic growth in the agricultural sector (Wavare & Pawar, 2022).

**Objectives of the Research Study:**

The present research study is based on the following specific objectives –

1. To study the structure of agricultural extension system in India.
2. To examine the role of agricultural extension system in attaining the vision of Viksit Bharat.

**Data analysis and Interpretation:****Structure of Agricultural Extension System in India:**

The agricultural extension system in India is a multi-layered and complex framework strategically designed to facilitate the dissemination of agricultural knowledge, technologies, and practices to farmers. This system is crucial in empowering farmers, enhancing productivity, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. At the core of the extension system is the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), which spearheads research and development initiatives and plays a pivotal role in shaping policies related to agricultural education and extension. Below ICAR, there exists a network of State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) and research institutes that contribute to localized agricultural research and innovation tailored to specific regional challenges and opportunities.

The extension system operates primarily at the state level, where the respective State Departments of Agriculture and Horticulture play vital roles in implementing extension programs and delivering services to farmers. These departments are responsible for creating awareness about new technologies, training programs, and sustainable farming practices. The frontline extension workers, often referred to as Agricultural Extension Officers (AEOs) or Village Agricultural Officers (VAOs), represent the primary interface between the farmers and the extension services. They facilitate information transfer through farm visits, demonstrations, training sessions, and workshops.

Community participation is a critical aspect of the agricultural extension system in India. Farmer cooperatives and self-help groups (SHGs) have been integral in bridging the communication gap between extension services and farmers. By forming localized platforms for knowledge exchange, these groups empower farmers with collective bargaining power and access to resources, credit, and markets. The use of technology has also permeated the extension system; mobile apps, SMS services, and online platforms have emerged as valuable tools for disseminating timely information about weather updates, pest management, crop advisories, and market prices, thereby enabling farmers to make informed decisions.

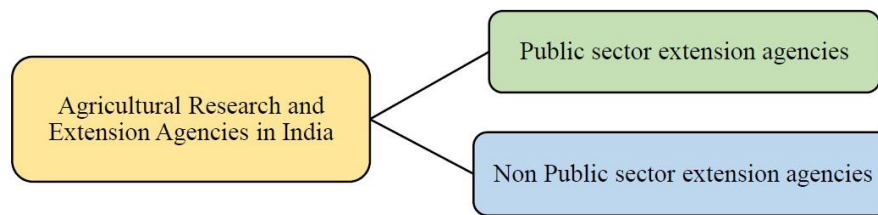
Moreover, the government has recognized the necessity to integrate various stakeholders in the agricultural extension ecosystem, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and academic institutions. These collaborations foster a more holistic approach to agricultural extension, ensuring that diverse perspectives and expertise enrich the knowledge pool available to farmers. The Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model has also gained momentum, with private companies contributing to research and extension services, thereby enhancing the reach and effectiveness of agricultural interventions.

Despite these structures, the agricultural extension system in India faces several challenges. One of the most pressing issues is the disparity in service delivery, particularly in remote and underserved areas where farmers may remain isolated from extension services. There is also a need for continuous capacity building among extension workers to ensure they are well-versed with the latest agricultural advancements and methodologies. Additionally, the gender gap in agricultural extension remains a significant concern, as women farmers often have limited access to extension services despite their crucial role in agricultural production.

In conclusion, the agricultural extension system in India is a dynamic and integral component of the agricultural landscape, aimed at enhancing farmer knowledge and productivity. While the existing structure has strengths that facilitate the dissemination of knowledge and technology, there is a pressing need for reforms and adaptations to address persistent challenges and harness the full potential of extension services in supporting sustainable agricultural development. Through innovative approaches and collaborative efforts, the agricultural extension

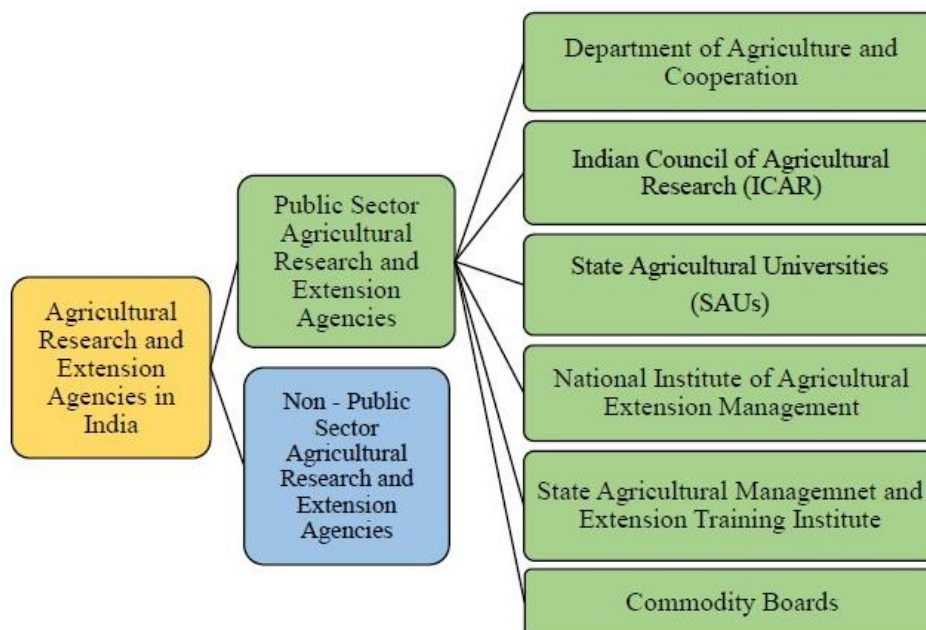
system can continue to evolve and better meet the needs of the diverse farming community in India.

**Figure 1: Types of Agricultural Research and Extension Agencies in India**



Source: (Pawar, 2023)

**Figure 2: Types of Public Sector Agri. Research and Extension Agencies in India**



Source: (Pawar, 2023)

### **Role of Agricultural Extension System in Attaining the Vision of Viksit Bharat:**

The vision of "Viksit Bharat," which translates to "Developed India," aims to transform India into a developed nation by 2047, the centenary of India's independence. Achieving this vision requires sustainable development across various sectors, with agriculture being a key driver for economic growth, food security, and rural development. The agricultural extension system plays a vital role in realizing this vision through several key functions:

1. **Knowledge Dissemination:** The agricultural extension system serves as a critical conduit for the dissemination of knowledge and information about modern agricultural practices, technologies, and innovations. By providing farmers with access to the latest research and developments, extension services help improve productivity and efficiency, leading to higher agricultural outputs.
2. **Capacity Building:** Through training programs, workshops, and field demonstrations, agricultural extension services help build the capacity of farmers and local communities. This empowerment enables them to adopt best practices in areas such as crop management, pest control, soil health, and water conservation, which are essential for sustainable agriculture.

3. **Promoting Sustainable Agricultural Practices:** Extension services play a significant role in promoting sustainable agricultural practices that enhance environmental conservation while increasing food production. This includes educating farmers about organic farming, integrated pest management, and sustainable resource management to ensure long-term agricultural viability.
4. **Strengthening Farmer Organizations:** The agricultural extension system facilitates the formation and strengthening of farmer cooperatives, self-help groups, and producer organizations. By fostering collective action, these organizations can enhance bargaining power, access markets, and ensure better prices for their produce, contributing to improved livelihoods and rural development.
5. **Linkage with Markets:** Effective agricultural extension services help farmers understand market dynamics and trends, enabling them to make informed decisions about what to grow and when to sell. By connecting farmers to markets, both physical and digital, extension services can help increase farmers' income and reduce post-harvest losses.
6. **Response to Policy Changes:** Agricultural extension agents can help farmers navigate and understand government policies, schemes, and subsidies aimed at supporting agricultural development. This guidance ensures that farmers can take advantage of available resources and benefits, contributing to their economic viability.
7. **Promoting Innovation and Technology Adoption:** The agricultural extension system fosters an environment of innovation by promoting the adoption of new technologies, including precision farming, biotechnology, and digital agriculture. This encourages farmers to embrace modern techniques that can lead to increased productivity and efficiency, which is crucial for a developed agricultural system.
8. **Addressing Socioeconomic Issues:** By focusing on gender equity and inclusion, agricultural extension services can empower marginalized groups, particularly women and smallholder farmers. This inclusivity is crucial for equitable rural development and can contribute significantly to reducing poverty and enhancing the quality of life in rural areas.
9. **Research and Feedback Loop:** Agricultural extension services facilitate a feedback loop between farmers and research institutions. By communicating farmers' challenges and needs to researchers, extension services can help align agricultural research priorities with the realities on the ground, ensuring that innovations are relevant and effectively address farmer concerns.

### Conclusion:

In conclusion, this research underscores the pivotal role of agricultural extension agencies in realizing the vision of 'Viksit Bharat'. As India aspires towards a developed nation, the enhancement of agricultural productivity, sustainability, and farmer welfare becomes imperative. Agricultural extension agencies serve as critical links between the government, research institutions, and farmers, facilitating the dissemination of innovative farming techniques, modern technologies, and best practices that are essential for achieving food security and economic growth. The study highlights the necessity for these agencies to adapt to the evolving agricultural landscape by incorporating digital tools, enhancing capacity-building initiatives, and fostering participatory approaches to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness.

Furthermore, collaboration between extension agencies and other stakeholders, including NGOs and private sector players, can amplify reach and impact. The findings of this research advocate for a more robust investment in agricultural extension services, with a specific focus on

tailoring programs to meet the diverse needs of farmers across various regions. Ultimately, strengthening agricultural extension agencies is not merely a strategy for enhancing agricultural output but a vital component in the broader agenda of national development, social equity, and sustainable livelihoods in the quest for a prosperous and Viksit Bharat.

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