Outreach Programs for Rural Community Development

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Introduction

Indian economy continues to develop with the expansion of the manufacturing and the service sector including agriculture. The significance of agriculture was recognized by the Government of India and the emphasis was given to agriculture sector to overcome the problem of acute shortage of food grains. During to efforts of the Government under Green Revolution there was a remarkable increase in the food-grains production in 1967-68. Thus, the Green Revolution, as described by agricultural economists, is a *'strategy of increasing agricultural productivity'.*

During the era of Green Revolution, the Indian Council of Agricultural research and Agricultural Universities were established in all States and Union Territories. The next major initiative was the establishment of Agriculture Science Centre [Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)] in every district to promote agricultural research, training and extension. With a view to further continue this process, institutional set up for agriculture research, training and extension was evolved in 1970's. Encouraged by their success, KVKs have been established in all 642 districts across the country with the view to enhance growth of agriculture to accommodate the needs of population for ensuring food security, poverty elevations drive, stability over all inclusive as well as sustainability of growth of the overall economy.

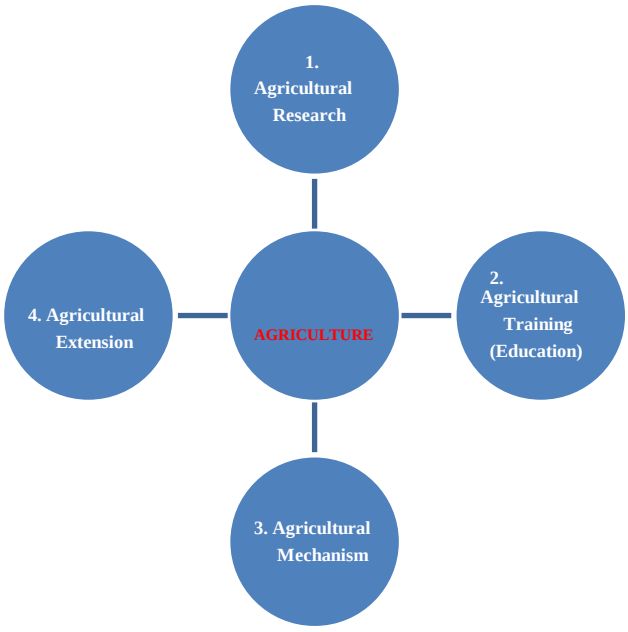
Due to heavy growth of population, the growth of agriculture proved poor and unsatisfactory. An unsatisfactory performance of Agricultural sector in India since the mid 90's made the educationist and economists to undertake researches. The Agricultural Universities are engaged in research and education at the grassroots level undertaking research, training and extension work. They are looked upon as the catalyst of rural development due to the fact that they undertake the task of lab to land and popularize the new techniques and methods to increase agricultural production.

The Community Development Model for Rural Development

The Community Development Model for Rural Development is intended to examine the ways and means to apply science and technology in the field of agriculture through institutional mechanism at the apex, intermediate and more particularly at the grassroots level.

Moreover, agricultural development is the nucleus of rural development which can be implemented with field outreach programs by the educational institutions like Universities. In short

rural community development lies in the development of Rural Sector in India.



Agriculture: The agriculture involves large fields for production of crops, number of animals, large resource inputs (pesticides, fertilizers, etc.), and a require level of mechanization. These operations generally attempt to maximize financial income from grain, produce, or livestock.

Other recent changes in agriculture include hydroponics, plant breeding, hybridization, gene manipulation, better management of soil nutrients, and improved weed control. Genetic engineering has yielded crops which have capabilities beyond those of naturally occurring plants, such as higher yields and disease resistance. Modified seeds germinate faster, and thus can be grown in an extended growing area. Other agricultural production goods include timber, fertilizers, animal hides, leather, industrial chemicals (starch, sugar, ethanol, alcohols and plastics), fibers (cotton, wool, hemp, and flax), fuels (methane from biomass, biodiesel), cut flowers, ornamental and nursery plants etc.

The packing, processing, and marketing of agricultural products are closely related activities also influenced by science. Methods of quick – freezing and dehydration have increased the markets for farm products.

Thus, the agriculture is a main source of survival of Indian community which is at the Centre of this Community Development Model on the basis of which other subsequent parts of the models are also important to study.

1. Agricultural Research: Application of science and technology accelerates the pace of development. Science and technology have the capacity to transform the quality and tenure of human life. It can solve the chronic problems of productivity, poverty, unemployment in developing countries.

Agricultural research and invention of new technology and machines resulted in increase in the agricultural production. Agricultural research requires institutional set up and financial support of the government. The foundation of agricultural research and education in India was laid for the development of Indian community. The Department of Agricultural Research and Education was set up within the Ministry of Agriculture in 1973 to co-ordinate research and educational activities, animal husbandry and fisheries.

2. Agricultural Mechanism: The twentieth century saw massive changes in agricultural practice, particularly in agricultural chemistry and in mechanization. Agricultural chemistry includes the application of chemical fertilizers, chemical insecticides and chemical fungicides, soil makeup, analysis of agricultural products, and nutritional needs of farm animals. The Green Revolution spread many of the benefits of agricultural chemistry to farms throughout the world, without the extreme pollution that originally accompanied them. Mechanization has also enormously increased farm efficiency and productivity in most regions of the world, especially in the form of the tractor and various gins "engines" like the cotton gin, semiautomatic balers and threshers.

3. Agricultural Training (Education): Agricultural training / education implies training in skills related to agriculture and allied activities through institutions.

Agricultural education is instruction about crop production, livestock management, soil and water conservation, and various other aspects of agriculture. Agricultural education includes instruction in food education, such as nutrition. Agricultural and food education improves the quality of life for all the people by helping farmers increase production, conserve resources, and provide nutritious foods. There are four major fields of agricultural education:

- Elementary agriculture
- Vocational agriculture
- College agriculture
- General education agriculture

Elementary agriculture is taught in public schools and deals with such subjects as how plants and animals grow and how soil is formed and conserved. *Vocational agriculture* trains people for jobs

in such areas as production, marketing, and conservation. *College agriculture* involves training of people to teach, conduct research, or provide information to advance the field of agriculture and food science in other ways. *General education agriculture* informs the public about food and agriculture.

The role of Agricultural Education:

Agricultural Education is an active part of the curriculum for many high schools. This program area combines the home, the school, and the community as the means of education in agriculture. The courses provide students with a solid foundation of academic knowledge and ample opportunities to apply this knowledge through classroom activities, laboratory experiments and project applications, supervised agricultural experiences.

Realizing the importance of the agricultural education as a component of vocational/technical education, it is necessary to establish a number of Agricultural colleges in the different provinces. In the post-Independence period, a number of Agricultural and Multi-purpose schools were established. In four decades since then, 38 Agricultural Universities have been established all over the country. These Universities conduct courses in agriculture, agro-engineering, veterinary science and other related subjects at the under-graduate and post-graduate level. There are a number of Agricultural colleges under their jurisdiction.

4. Agricultural Extension**:** The term extension was first used to describe adult education programs in England in the second half of the 19th Century. These programs helped to expand or extend the work of universities beyond the campus and into the neighboring community. A number of other terms are used in different parts of the world to describe the same or a similar concept. The development of extension services in modern Asia has differed from country to country.

Among academics working in this field, some have recently argued that agricultural extension needs to be reinvented as a professional practice. Other authors have abandoned the idea of extension as a distinct concept, and prefer to think in terms of 'knowledge systems' in which farmers are seen as experts rather than adopters.

Agricultural extension efforts in India have made significant strides towards development of the agricultural sector. The report of the National Commission of Agriculture (Government of India, 2012) 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.

Agricultural extension is a favorite whipping boy in the agricultural system. Agricultural 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.

Strengthening Community Development Model by Indian Universities:

In Indian Universities like University of Mumbai, extension education has been included in the curriculum where the students are enrolling at large and make the community aware of its purpose, process and benefits. The programs are implemented under the instruction of Chief i.e. concern Director of the University with the help of nearly 20,000 college students and their teachers by six academic projects which are related to information technology, entrepreneurship & career guidance, status of women in the society, population education, industry orientation and open schooling. The colleges participating in the activities are grouped on zonal / district basis where the colleges are representing their Talukas, the small division of district. The schedule of the activities is prepared by every participating college. The students are divided in the groups and sent to the villages / areas for conducting the activities. The representative called as Field Co-ordinator from the head institution i.e. from the University is accompanying the students for monitoring the activities and report to the Head who present his report to the University. Further, the University present its report to the Government who frames the measures for the development of the sector.

Under its field outreach activities, the students actually go to the community and with the help of various activities such as street play, poster exhibition; seminars, rallies, research convention etc make the people aware of developmental measures for the agricultural sector and its subsectors. The posters, songs and slogans are specially designed for the purpose in local languages where they reach to the unreached sections of the society. In the presence of college teacher and the Field Coordinator, the activities are performed for the benefit of the society. The feedback is also taken from the community. Most of the time the beneficiaries are also interviewed by the students with pre designed questionnaire. Once the problems are found out, the measures for development was taken by the University with the help of government and non government organizations. This field outreach work has been considered for academic credit in addition to or as a part of their regular course of studies. Once the supervision is done for more than 120 hours of community work, the students are certified for the benefit of additional 10 grace marks or grades by the University for their final examination. In addition, the students are getting field experience which is important for their personality development.

In this way, the University has been implementing field outreach programs which has a very powerful and positive impact on the community. The Government has taken the initiative and funding the University for these developmental activities.

To summarize, agricultural extension is viewed as an educational program 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 leadership, improve their occupation, family and community life.

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