



## Market Led Extension in Agricultural Development

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*Market-led extension is an innovative approach in agricultural development that focuses on aligning extension services with market demands to enhance farmers' profitability and sustainability. Unlike traditional extension models that primarily emphasize production techniques, market-led extension integrates market intelligence, value chain development, and agribusiness linkages to empower farmers with market-driven insights. This approach involves real-time market information dissemination, demand-driven advisory services, and improved access to inputs, credit, and post-harvest technologies. By fostering strong linkages between farmers, agribusinesses, traders, and consumers, market-led extension helps farmers make informed production and marketing decisions. The strategy also encourages public-private partnerships, contract farming, and digital platforms to bridge the gap between producers and markets. However, challenges such as limited digital literacy, infrastructural gaps, and inadequate policy support hinder its widespread adoption. Addressing these challenges through capacity-building programs, financial support mechanisms, and policy reforms can enhance the effectiveness of market-led extension. By transforming agriculture into a demand-driven, market-responsive sector, this approach contributes to rural economic growth, enhances food security, and ensures the long-term sustainability of agricultural systems in India.*

### Introduction

Over the past half-century, Indian agriculture has made remarkable strides, achieving self-sufficiency in food grain production. However, despite the significant rise in production, farmers have not been adequately incentivized with profitable returns. With the globalization of commodity markets, farmers must adapt by becoming both producers and sellers to maximize their earnings. Currently, agricultural extension services primarily focus on providing farmers with production-related technologies. Given the present scenario, there is a crucial need to shift the focus of extension services from production-centric to market-oriented approaches to enhance farmers' income. Market-led extension helps the farmers to improve the quality of farm produce, increase the product value and marketability resulting in increasing of income to the farmers.

### Concept of market-led extension

In the evolving agricultural landscape, farmers need access to accurate and up-to-date information, covering everything from production techniques to market-oriented insights. This includes guidance on what to produce, when to produce, how much to produce, as well as the optimal timing, location, pricing, and form in which to sell their produce. Market-led extension views farmers as agripreneurs, helping them maximize their returns throughout the farming process. Additionally, it provides farmers with a diverse range of tailored practices suited to their specific local conditions and farming systems.

### Objective of market-led extension

- To identify possible areas of intervention of extension in agricultural marketing.
- To build up and use effective extension methodologies for providing need-based support to farming community in marketing of their produce.



- The present linkage among Research-Extension-Farmers is extended by market linkage.
- To identify and communicate innovation for value addition practices and post-harvest technologies.
- To develop network and action plans for extension to support marketing of the product at different level.

### **Role of extension personals in light of market-led extension**

SWOT analysis of the market to enhance farmers' awareness for effective production and marketing planning.

- Organization of Farmers' Interest Groups (FIGs) on commodity basis and building their capabilities.
- Enhancing the interactive and communication skill of the farmers to exchange their views with customers and other market forces (middlemen) for getting feedback and gain the bargaining during direct marketing.
- Establishing marketing and agro-processing linkages between farmers' groups, markets and private processors.

### **Extension strategies for creating awareness about market-led extension among the farmers**

- Identifying the farmers/ group of farmers, interested in export of agricultural commodities.
- Creating awareness among the farmers regarding market-Led extension.
- Conduct training for farmers in cost reduction strategies of farming.
- Development model procedures in cultivation of crop for export purpose.
- Dissemination of financial and market related information to the farmers.
- Organizing training for the farmers in grading and packing.
- Provide information through electronic mass media, TV, Internet etc.

### **Challenges of market-led extension**

Public extension system is gigantic in size and heavily burdened with several activities. Now incorporating a new marketing dimension into this system may become an agenda with several difficulties to tackle. Extension personnel must be encouraged to acquire essential marketing skills before engaging in market-oriented extension services. One of the biggest challenges in market-led extension is the development of precise, relevant, comprehensive, and timely market intelligence regarding products, market trends, consumer behaviour, and commodity pricing. Establishing a well-structured information policy is crucial to equipping farmers with valuable knowledge through improved digital platforms. Additionally, disparities in transportation, storage, and warehousing facilities across different regions present significant challenges that need to be addressed.

### **Conclusion**

Market-led extension empowers farmers to maximize their returns, reduce production costs, enhance product value, and improve marketability. Leveraging information and communication technology, along with electronic and print media, is essential for effectively delivering production and market-related insights to farmers. The adoption of advanced production technologies has enabled Indian farmers to transition from subsistence farming to self-sufficiency. To thrive in a liberalized market, the approach must shift from being supply-driven to market-driven, ensuring that farmers align their production with market demands to achieve higher profitability.