

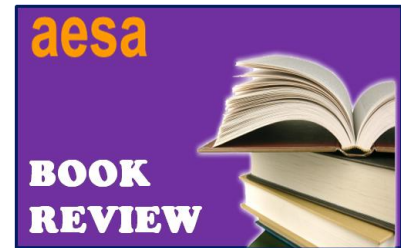
Agricultural Extension in South Asia

Text Book of Agricultural Extension with Global Innovations

Sagar Mondal (2013)

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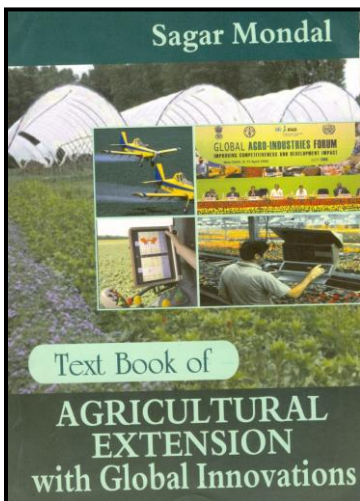
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Agriculture as a profession has been evolving since it was first started. Along with this, agricultural extension has also evolved a lot worldwide. But there have been very few attempts to record these changes in a textbook of agricultural extension in India. This book addresses this gap by presenting the evolution of agricultural extension starting with its basic concepts to recent developments worldwide with special emphasis on India.

Starting with the history of extension education and extension services, the author has provided a comprehensive account of evolution of extension and its various definitions and dimensions articulated by various authors at different points of time. The development of extension in India has been discussed in fair detail which gives constructive insights about the subject to extension academia, practitioners involved in extension and advisory services and anyone else who might be interested.

Extension has mostly been a state (provincial) subject in most of the developing countries with the service being offered mostly free of cost to farmers. But in many developed countries and in few developing countries, privatization was attempted which yielded mixed results. Similarly, there have been several experiments with public-private partnerships (PPP).



Three chapters of this book have been dedicated to discuss this aspect in detail and that is fair as many professionals around the world will agree that it is high time to make extension services cost effective and sustainable. However, very little emphasis is given to international experiences with respect to privatization. Further, detailing of these experiences with their outcomes would have given better insights and also a route map for other countries to follow.

Role of various private extension service providers in India starting from farmers associations to private firms and non-profit organisations and mass media are discussed in a comprehensive manner. Along with this, a concise review of the studies conducted on different service providers and their credibility with farmers would have helped readers better understand the ground reality of private extension services. The case of public-private partnership (PPP) between Dhanuka Agritech Ltd. with the Department of Agriculture (Government of Madhya Pradesh) discussed in this book where the partnership supported farmers with all kind of extension services, soil testing and micro-finance is an example not only for other Indian states but also for other developing countries.

In recent times, much emphasis has been placed on farmer led extension and gender aspect of agriculture. The author has rightly discussed these approaches in the book. The case of farmer-to-farmer (f2f) extension in Bangladesh discussed here is an interesting approach. Farmers have been learning from each other since time immemorial, but giving it an institutionalised form enhances credibility and also takes pressure off the public extension system.

The chapter on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) provides valuable information to the readers. ICTs have made knowledge management easier and it has been explained well in detail. The author has listed several ICT initiatives from across the globe but detailed information about these initiatives are lacking. Mobiles are an important tool in agricultural extension and rapidly gaining popularity within both the extension service providers and the farmers. Delving on this topic further and adding recent ICT initiatives along with their socio-economic impacts would have given the readers more information about ICTs.

A very informative and important chapter in the book is Climate Change Extension. A few countries have included this topic in their school curricula to bring awareness at a very early stage and that should be an example for others to follow. The crop models discussed here will be useful for the students and extension personnel who want to understand and take up study on climate change effects.

The trade agreements between countries and the treaties under the WTO impact agricultural development. A basic understanding of these aspects can be obtained from this book. The book reports that only 20% of extension workers and 4% farmers in India are aware of the “Agreement on Agriculture” under WTO. Some reasons for this lack of awareness and suggestions to increase awareness of these aspects among various agricultural stakeholders would have made this chapter more informative for the readers.

This text book is ideal for agricultural extension professionals and especially students of extension to get a basic idea about the evolution of extension. This book has the potential to become one of the most relevant textbook in extension if its contents are regularly updated by adding scholarly information and field experiences with more convincing evidence.

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