

Farmers' Access to Agricultural Extension Services Delivery Systems: Evidence from a Field Study in India

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Abstract : This paper examines the key determinants of farmers' access to agricultural extension services, sources of agricultural extension services preferred and accessed by the farmers. An ordered logistic regression model was used to analyse the data of the 360 sample households based on a primary survey conducted in western Uttar Pradesh, India. The study finds that farmers' decision to engage in the agricultural extension programme is significantly influenced by factors such as education level, gender, farming experience, social group, group membership, farm size, credit access, awareness about the extension scheme, farmers' perception, and distance from extension sources. The most intriguing finding of this study is that the progressive farmers, which have long been regarded as a major source of knowledge diffusion, are the most distrusted sources of information as they are suspected of withholding vital information from potential beneficiaries. The positive relationship between farm size and 'Access' underlines that the extension services should revisit their strategies for targeting more marginal and small farmers constituting over 85 percent of the agricultural households by incorporating their priorities in their outreach programs. The study suggests that marginal and small farmers' productive potential could still be greatly augmented by the appropriate technology, advisory services, guidance, and improved market access. Also, the perception of poor quality of the public extension services can be corrected by initiatives aimed at building up extension workers' capacity.

Keywords : agriculture, access, extension services, ordered logistic regression

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