**Agricultural extension**

is the application of scientific research and new knowledge to [agricultural](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agricultural) practices through [farmer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farmer) [education](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education). The field of 'extension' now encompasses a wider range of communication and learning activities organized for [rural](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rural_area) people by educators from different disciplines, including [agriculture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agriculture), [agricultural marketing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agricultural_marketing), [health](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health), and [business studies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_studies).

The transfer of agricultural information and technology to the farmers and similarly transferring information from farmers to researchers .

**What is Extension?**

The word ‘Extension’ is derived from the Latin roots, ‘ex’ meaning ‘out’ and ‘tensio’ meaning ‘stretching’. Literally it means ‘stretching out’. That is stretching out beyond the boundaries of university and research stations to reach the rural people to educate them on various issues.

The use of the term “extension” was first recorded in Britain in the 1840s. James Stuart, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who gave several lecturers to women’s associations and working man’s clubs in the north of England during 1867-68, is considered as father of extension. But, the term was formally used for the first time in 1873 by Cambridge University to describe a particular ‘Extension’ of educational innovation. This was to take the educational advantages of universities to the ordinary people where they lived and worked.

In India, the terms community development and extension became more popular with the launching of Community Development Projects in 1952 and with the establishment of the National Extension Service in 1953. Since then, Community development has been regarded as a programme for an all-round development of the rural people, and extension as the means to achieve this objective.

**What is Education?**

Education is the process of developing capabilities of the individuals so that they can respond appropriately to the situations. Or in simple words, it is the process of production of desirable changes in the human behaviour, i.e. bringing out the desired changes in knowledge (things known), attitude (things felt) and skill (things done), either in all, or one or more of them.

Types of Education:Informal Education is the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skill, attitude and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment at home , at work, at play, etc. Example: Reading books, newspaper, etc.

Formal Education is the highly institutionalized, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured education system spanning lower primary school and upper reaches of the university. Example: School EducationNon-formal Education is an organised , systematic, educational activity carried on outside the frame work of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults and children according to their needs. Example: Extension Education.

**1.2 Extension Education**

In continuation to what is being discussed earlier in ‘What is Extension’, Cumberlage (1956) defined that Extension is education of the rural adults and children outside the school, in matters of their own choice and interest; education for freedom which seeks to help persons to use the liberty of action with which a democratic society is constructed. But, Kelsey and Hearne (1963) explained that extension work is an out-of-school systems of education in which adults and young people learn by doing.

It may be observed from these definitions that education is the integral part of extension and the type of education imparted to the out of school children and adult is non-formal in nature. However, these definitions do not cover the entire scope of Extension Education which has now attended the stature of a distinct discipline with its own research, methodology, teaching and field (practice) of activities.

Leagans (1961) defines Extension Education is an applied science consisting of content derived from research, accumulated field experiences and relevant principles drawn from the behavioural sciences synthesized with useful technology in to a body of philosophy, principles, contents and methods focused on the problems of out-of-school education for adults and youth.

The National Commission on Agriculture (1976) explains extension education as an out-ofschool education and services for the members of the farm family and others directly or indirectly engaged in farm production, to enable them to adopt improved practices on production, management, conservation and marketing.

O P Dahama(1973) defines extension education as an educational process to provide knowledge to the rural people about the improved practices in a convincing manner and help them to take decision within their specific local conditions .

We may say that the extension education is a science which deals with the creation, transmission and application of knowledge designed to bring about planned changes in the behaviour( knowledge, skill and attitude) of people, with a view to help them live better by learning the ways of improving their vocations, enterprise and institutions.

By definition, extension and extension education are synonymous. They are used interchangeable in the extension literatures.

**Role of Agriculture Extension in increasing agricultural productivity**

Agriculture is the main source of income for around 2.5 billion people in the developing world. It remains the backbone of many African economies, accounting for 57 percent of total employment, 17 percent of GDP and 11 percent of export earnings on the continent (World Bank, 2008). In Nigeria, the sector contributed 34.5 percent to GDP and US$2,197 million foreign exchange earnings mainly from cocoa, timber and non-traditional agricultural exports in 2009 (ISSER, 2010). According to the MoFA (2010), 50.6 percent of the total labour force in the country is engaged in farming, forestry, fishing and hunting, with women accounting for 51.8 percent in 2009.

In spite of the key role agriculture plays in the growth of the economy of Nigeria, the sector has recorded a decline in its contribution to GDP, employment, government revenue and foreign exchange earnings in recent years. MoFEP (2010) has stated that whereas the agricultural sector grew in 2010 by 4.8 percent and contributed 32.4 percent to GDP, the services sector grew by 6.1 percent and contributed 32.8 percent as its share to GDP, displacing the Agricultural sector as the highest contributor to GDP.

The decline in growth of agriculture is caused by lack of access to markets and credits, low level of technology especially mechanization, inadequate post-harvest infrastructure (storage, processing, transport), low uptake of research findings by stakeholders and limited availability of improved technological packages especially planting materials and certified seeds (MoFA, 2007). Given these challenges, for agriculture to assume its leading role as the greatest provider of employment and reduction in poverty of the majority of the rural people, agricultural development is imperative. Agricultural extension services are now a major activity and basic element in programmes and projects formulated to bring about agricultural development and improvement in the quality of lives of the rural poor farmers (NDPC,2011).

Through provision of extension services, the field extension staffs are mandated to transfer proven and accepted farming practices to farmers in a participatory manner and to assist them to secure microloans to help them get started on their own farms or expand them. The field extension staffs are also expected to teach rural farmers post- harvest processing and storage of the foodstuffs. They also provide credit and market- access assistance to the farmers to secure capital for their activities and to sell their surplus crops to generate income for their families (MoFA, 2007).

With the inception of agricultural extension services in the country some decades ago, agricultural modernization has not been achieved. The Dawakin Kudu District (2010) has stated that most of the beneficiary farmers of extension services intervention in the district still produce foodstuffs meant for home consumption, do not have access to market for their produce and rely on natural rain for the cultivation of their crops, hence the failure of the rains sometimes lead to poor yield thereby perpetuating their poverty. It is in this regard that the study is undertaken to unearth the problems of extension services delivery in theregion.

Bardsly (1982) cited by Nwuzor (2009) view agricultural extension as a service or system which assists farm people through educational procedures in improving farming method and techniques, increasing production efficiency and income, bettering their levels of living and lifting social and educational lives of rural people. It insures information obtained and assembled from research studies based on experience, trail and demonstration for the purpose of extending knowledge to the rural [dwellers](https://projectchampionz.com.ng/tag/dwellers/). The use of farm visit group method and discussion, mass media, posters and audio visual and are very effective means of extending knowledge to the rural populace. Food and agricultural organization (FAO) 1992 view agricultural extension as informal out of school educational services for training and influencing to adopt improved practices in crops and livestock production, management, conservation and marketing. (STAN 1999) defined agricultural extension education is a teaching and learning process in which the farmers are taught better, method farming in order to raise productivity and their standard of living.