

International Journal of Agriculture Extension and Social Development

Volume 9; Issue 4; April 2026; Page No. 638-640

Received: 06-02-2026
Accepted: 10-03-2026

Indexed Journal
Peer Reviewed Journal

Suggestions of agriculture assistants for improving agricultural extension services in Konkan region of Maharashtra

¹Tejashri P Dahiphle and ²Dr. SC Warwadekar

¹Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension Education, College of Agriculture, DBSKKV, Dapoli, Maharashtra, India

²Head, Department of Agricultural Extension Education, College of Agriculture, DBSKKV, Dapoli, Maharashtra, India

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26180723.2026.v9.i4h.3531>

Corresponding Author: Tejashri P Dahiphle

Abstract

The present study was undertaken with the main objective of understanding the socio-economic conditions and operational suggestions of Agriculture Assistants in the Konkan region of Maharashtra. The study was conducted in Ratnagiri and Raigad districts. Using multi-stage sampling, 240 Agriculture Assistants were selected from 24 tahsils (10 per tahsil). An ex-post facto research design was adopted and data were collected through personal interviews. Analysis employed frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Rank Based Quotient (RBQ) scores. Key findings revealed that continuous professional training programs were endorsed by 93.33% of respondents (RBQ = 78.50), followed by provision of dedicated field vehicles (91.66%; RBQ = 77.80), performance-based compensation (91.66%; RBQ = 76.80), incentives linked to outcomes (91.66%; RBQ = 76.50), timely sanction of programmes (90.83%; RBQ = 75.90), extension target bonuses (87.50%; RBQ = 74.90), performance-based evaluation (79.16%; RBQ = 72.40), local coordinator provision (78.33%; RBQ = 71.20), clear role definition (78.33%; RBQ = 69.40), contingency planning (71.66%; RBQ = 69.00), social programme integration (70.83%; RBQ = 67.80), staff relocation (58.33%), improved input distribution (54.58%), emergency tool kits (45.41%), and workload redistribution (43.75%). These findings underscore systemic gaps in infrastructure, incentives, and organizational support that must be addressed to strengthen frontline extension delivery.

Keywords: Extension personnel, suggestions, agricultural assistants, extension services, Konkan region, constraints, human resource development, frontline extension workers

Introduction

Agriculture remains the backbone of the Indian economy, supporting the livelihoods of a majority of the rural population. In this context, agricultural extension occupies a position of critical importance, serving as a vital link between research institutions and the farming community. Extension services aim to disseminate scientific knowledge, improve farming practices, and enhance the socio-economic status of farmers through effective communication and capacity-building efforts.

Among the various stakeholders in the extension system, Agriculture Assistants occupy a pivotal position as grassroots-level functionaries. They act as the primary interface between farmers and the agricultural development machinery, facilitating technology transfer, organizing demonstrations, conducting field visits, and providing advisory services. Their effectiveness directly influences the adoption of improved agricultural practices and the success of government schemes.

However, despite their crucial role, Agriculture Assistants frequently encounter multiple constraints such as inadequate infrastructure, excessive administrative workload, lack of timely resources, and limited opportunities for professional development. These challenges adversely affect job performance and the overall efficiency of extension

services. In many cases, the gap between policy formulation and field-level implementation arises due to insufficient consideration of the practical difficulties faced by these frontline workers.

Understanding the suggestions of Agriculture Assistants is therefore essential for strengthening the extension delivery system. Their field-based experiences provide valuable insights into operational challenges and practical solutions that can enhance service effectiveness. Incorporating their suggestions into planning and policy formulation can lead to more responsive, need-based, and sustainable agricultural development strategies.

In view of this, the present study systematically analyzes the suggestions of Agriculture Assistants to improve the functioning of agricultural extension services, particularly in the Konkan region of Maharashtra. The findings are expected to contribute to policy refinement, institutional strengthening, and improved service delivery in the agricultural sector.

Objective

To identify the suggestions given by Agriculture Assistants for improving extension services in the Konkan region of Maharashtra.

Materials and Methods

The present investigation was conducted in the Konkan region of Maharashtra, which constitutes a distinct coastal agro-ecological zone along the western seaboard of India. The region is broadly categorized into North and South Konkan based on its geographical and administrative divisions. For the purpose of this study, Raigad district was purposively selected to represent North Konkan, while Ratnagiri district was selected to represent South Konkan. This purposive selection was predicated on agro-ecological representativeness, administrative significance, and the relative concentration of agricultural extension personnel in these districts.

Ratnagiri district is administratively organized into three revenue subdivisions - Ratnagiri, Chiplun, and Dapoli - while Raigad district comprises four subdivisions: Mahad, Mangaon, Khopoli, and Alibag. To ensure comprehensive regional coverage and to minimize geographic bias, all subdivisions from both selected districts were included in the sampling framework, thereby encompassing the full

administrative breadth of the study area.

Agriculture Assistants with a minimum of two years of field experience were eligible for selection. From each tahsil, 10 Agricultural Assistants were selected using multi-stage sampling. A total of 24 tahsils were covered, yielding a final sample of 240 Agricultural Assistants. An ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. Data were collected through structured personal interviews. The collected data were scored, tabulated, and analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and the Rank Based Quotient (RBQ) method.

Results and Discussion

The suggestions provided by the respondents for overcoming the constraints in the transfer of agricultural technology were systematically grouped into thematic categories using content analysis and prioritized using the Rank Based Quotient (RBQ) method along with frequency and percentage. The consolidated results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to the suggestions given for overcoming constraints in transfer of agriculture technology (N=240)

Sl. No.	Suggestions	Category	RBQ Score	Rank	Frequency	Percentage
1	Providing continuous professional training programs	Training & Capacity Building	78.50	I	224	93.33
2	Dedicated vehicles for field visits	Mobility Support	77.80	II	220	91.66
3	Introduce performance- based compensation or incentives for additional work.	Financial/ Administrative	76.80	III	220	91.66
4	Incentives linked to performance and outcomes	Financial Incentives	76.50	IV	220	91.66
5	Avoid delay in sanction of programme /activities	Administrative Efficiency	75.90	V	218	90.83
6	Bonus for achieving extension targets	Financial Incentives	74.90	VI	210	87.50
7	Evaluation as per work performance	Performance Management	72.40	VII	190	79.16
8	Provision of local coordinators to ensure presence of farmers on visit days	Organizational Support	71.20	VIII	188	78.33
9	Clear role definition	Organizational Structure	69.40	IX	18	78.33
10	Provide contingency plans for emergency	Disaster Management	69.00	X	172	71.66
11	Integrate social programmes into regular work schedules	Work Management	67.80	XI	170	70.83
12	Relocate staff to nearer locations if feasible	Human Resource Management	64.50	XII	140	58.33
13	Difficulty in the distribution of inputs to the farmers	Input Supply System	62.10	XIII	131	54.58
14	Provision of kit with essential tools at each block level for use in emergencies and natural calamities	Resource Support	59.20	XIV	109	45.41
15	Redistribute workload or pull the service of additional assistants in overloaded areas	Workload Management	57.80	XV	105	43.75

Rank I - Training & Capacity Building: Providing continuous professional training programs was the most endorsed suggestion (93.33%; RBQ = 78.50). This reflects limitations in communication and technical skills, particularly given the diverse cropping patterns and climatic variability of the Konkan region.

Rank II - Mobility Support: Providing dedicated vehicles for field visits was endorsed by 91.66% of respondents (RBQ = 77.80). In Konkan's hilly terrain with scattered villages and poor road connectivity, transport facilities are a critical operational requirement.

Rank III - Financial/Administrative: Introducing performance-based compensation for additional work was supported by 91.66% (RBQ = 76.80). Agriculture Assistants often perform multiple duties without commensurate rewards, adversely affecting their motivation and efficiency.

Rank IV - Financial Incentives: Incentives linked to performance and outcomes were supported by 91.66% (RBQ = 76.50), and bonus payments for achieving extension targets by 87.50% (RBQ = 74.90), collectively highlighting the importance of a robust incentive framework in challenging field conditions.

Rank V - Administrative Efficiency: Avoiding delays in the sanction of programmes and activities was endorsed by 90.83% (RBQ = 75.90). Timely approvals are especially critical in Konkan, where agricultural operations are highly seasonal and monsoon-dependent.

Rank VII - Performance Management: Evaluation based on actual work performance was supported by 79.16% (RBQ = 72.40), underscoring the demand for a fair and transparent appraisal system to motivate quality service delivery.

Rank VIII - Organizational Support: Provision of local coordinators to ensure farmer presence on field visit days was endorsed by 78.33% (RBQ = 71.20). As Konkani farmers often engage in multiple occupations, dedicated coordination is essential for communication effectiveness.

Rank IX - Organizational Structure: Clear role definition was requested by 78.33% (RBQ = 69.40), reflecting the efficiency loss caused by overlapping responsibilities and ambiguous mandates.

Rank X - Disaster Management: Provision of contingency plans for emergencies was endorsed by 71.66% (RBQ = 69.00). The Konkani region is particularly vulnerable to heavy rainfall, floods, and landslides, making preparedness planning essential.

Rank XI - Work Management: Integration of social programmes into regular work schedules was supported by 70.83% (RBQ = 67.80), recognizing the importance of community rapport in rural extension delivery.

Ranks XII-XV - Human Resources & Infrastructure: Staff relocation to nearer postings (58.33%), improved input distribution (54.58%), provision of emergency tool kits at block level (45.41%), and redistribution or augmentation of field staff (43.75%) were also identified as significant, though relatively lower-ranked, systemic improvements.

The findings are broadly consistent with those of Ingale (2014)^[2], Bipin Babu (2020)^[1], Amita Kshatriya (2022)^[3], and Nagiri (2022)^[4], who similarly documented inadequacies in infrastructure support, incentive structures, and organizational clarity as impediments to effective agricultural extension in comparable regional contexts.

Conclusion

The present study systematically captures the field-level perspective of Agriculture Assistants in the Konkani region, revealing a clear hierarchy of institutional improvements necessary to enhance extension effectiveness. Training and capacity building, mobility support, and performance-based incentives emerged as the three most critical areas requiring immediate policy attention. Organizational clarity, disaster preparedness, and logistical support complete a comprehensive reform agenda.

Strengthening these dimensions will require coordinated action from agricultural universities, state departments, and district administrations. Sustained investment in frontline extension capacity - particularly in geographically challenging regions such as Konkani - is imperative to bridge the persistent gap between agricultural research and farmer practice. Future studies may explore the implementation barriers to these suggestions and assess the impact of targeted reforms on extension outcomes.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude towards my honorable research guide Dr. S. C. Warwadekar for his intellectual inspiration, valuable suggestions, constant guidance, cooperative attitude, and willing help throughout the course of investigation and preparation of the manuscript.

References

1. Bipin Babu KK. Constraints faced by Village Extension Officers in technology transfer - A study in Kerala. *J Ext Educ.* 2020;32(3):6478-6484.
2. Ingale MR. Constraints experienced by agricultural extension workers in the transfer of technology in Marathwada region of Maharashtra [dissertation]. Parbhani: Vasantao Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth; 2014.
3. Kshatriya A. A study on constraints faced by Agricultural Assistants in extension services: Evidence from Western Maharashtra. *Indian J Ext Educ.* 2022;58(4):112-118.
4. Nagiri B. Constraints of field-level extension functionaries and strategies for improvement: A case study from Karnataka. *J Community Mobilization Sustain Dev.* 2022;17(1):45-52.
5. Nikam V, Ashok A, Kale RB. The functionality of agricultural extension and advisory services from a system perspective: A subnational level analysis in India. *The Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension.* 2023 Oct 20;29(5):557-581.