

Agricultural Journalism and Its Relevance in Extension Education

* Abhishek Sonkar¹, Abhishek Sonkar² and Anurag Dixit²

¹Research Scholar Monad University, Hapur U.P. - 245304

²Research Scholar ANDUA&T, Kumarganj, Ayodhya, U.P.- 224229

*Corresponding Author's email: apnasonkar12345@gmail.com

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy, engaging more than half of the population directly or indirectly. In this era of rapid globalization, modernization, and climate uncertainty, farmers need timely, accurate, and practical information to improve productivity, adopt innovations, and safeguard livelihoods. Here, Agricultural Journalism emerges as a crucial tool for strengthening communication between scientists, extension workers, policymakers, and farming communities.

Agricultural journalism is the specialized branch of journalism that deals with collecting, processing, and disseminating agricultural information through newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and digital platforms. It is not just about reporting events, but about interpreting agricultural research, policies, and technologies in a way that farmers and rural communities can understand and apply. In extension education, agricultural journalism acts as a powerful medium to bridge the gap between research stations and farmers' fields.

Concept of Agricultural Journalism

Agricultural journalism integrates journalism principles with agricultural knowledge. Unlike general journalism, it is not confined to reporting news; it also involves educating and motivating farmers to adopt improved practices.

Key Characteristics

1. **Subject-specific** – Focused on agriculture, rural development, food security, and allied sectors.
2. **Educational role** – Converts complex scientific language into simple, practical messages.
3. **Multi-media approach** – Utilizes print, broadcast, and digital platforms.
4. **Two-way communication** – Provides feedback from farmers to policymakers and researchers.
5. **Development-oriented** – Aims at improving farm productivity, sustainability, and rural livelihoods.

Historical Perspective

Agricultural journalism in India can be traced back to the late 19th century, when farm bulletins, newspapers, and agricultural magazines started publishing content for farmers. Over time, agricultural sections in newspapers, government newsletters, All India Radio's *Krishi Darshan* program, and Doordarshan's *Krishi Darshan* series played a key role in reaching rural masses. With the advent of ICT (Information and Communication Technology), the scope of agricultural journalism has expanded into digital journalism, farm portals, mobile apps, and social media platforms, making it more interactive and accessible.

Role of Agricultural Journalism in Extension Education

Extension education aims at transferring scientific research into field-level practices. Agricultural journalism strengthens this mission through effective communication.

1. Dissemination of Agricultural Innovations

- Provides information on new crop varieties, fertilizers, pest control methods, irrigation techniques, and farm machinery.
- Converts scientific findings into **easy-to-understand formats** like stories, features, and interviews.

2. Creating Awareness about Government Schemes

- Acts as a medium to inform farmers about schemes like PM-Kisan, Soil Health Card, PMFBY crop insurance, and Kisan Credit Card.
- Helps ensure that **benefits reach the target farmers** in time.

3. Weather and Market Information

- Timely reporting on **monsoon patterns, weather forecasts, and mandi prices** helps farmers in decision-making.
- Reduces risk and enhances income by enabling farmers to plan sowing and marketing.

4. Promoting Success Stories

- Highlights achievements of progressive farmers, self-help groups, and FPOs.
- Motivates other farmers to adopt modern practices through **peer learning**.

5. Addressing Social and Environmental Issues

- Raises awareness on soil degradation, climate change, organic farming, and sustainable practices.
- Educates farmers on health, nutrition, and gender equality in agriculture.

6. Feedback Mechanism

- Agricultural journalists bring **ground-level issues**—such as price crashes, pest outbreaks, or subsidy delays—to the notice of policymakers.
- Thus, journalism acts as a **two-way bridge** between farmers and the government.

Tools and Mediums of Agricultural Journalism

1. **Print Media** – Agricultural magazines (*Kheti, Indian Farming*), regional newspapers, and bulletins.
2. **Broadcast Media** – All India Radio's *Krishi Vigyan* programs, Doordarshan's *Krishi Darshan*.
3. **Digital Platforms** – Websites like *Agriwatch, Krishak Jagat*, and *AgriApp*.
4. **Social Media** – YouTube, Facebook groups, and WhatsApp communities for farmer interaction.
5. **Mobile Journalism (MoJo)** – Farmers directly receiving real-time updates through SMS, mobile apps, and IVRS.

Challenges in Agricultural Journalism

Despite its significance, agricultural journalism faces several challenges:

- Lack of trained agricultural journalists with both subject knowledge and communication skills.
- Limited coverage of rural/agriculture news in mainstream media.
- Dependence on government or institutional funding, limiting independent reporting.
- Poor access to digital technology among small and marginal farmers.
- Language barriers, as much content is in English or Hindi, excluding regional dialects.

Future of Agricultural Journalism

The future of agricultural journalism lies in digital transformation and participatory communication. The following trends are emerging:

- **Use of AI and Big Data** for real-time weather, pest, and market information.
- **Citizen Journalism by Farmers** through mobile videos and blogs.
- Integration of **social media influencers** in agricultural communication.
- Development of **multilingual agricultural content** for diverse farmer populations.
- Collaboration between **research institutions, KVKs, and journalists** for knowledge sharing.

Conclusion

Agricultural journalism is not merely about reporting events; it is about educating, empowering, and transforming rural communities. Its role in extension education is crucial as it helps farmers adopt new technologies, access government schemes, and make informed decisions. With the rise of digital media and ICT, agricultural journalism can revolutionize extension services by making information timely, relevant, and accessible to every farmer. To achieve the vision of doubling farmers' income and ensuring sustainable agriculture, agricultural journalism must be strengthened through capacity building, farmer-centric reporting, and integration with extension systems.

References

1. Ray, G. L. & Mandal, S. (2015). *Research Methods in Social Sciences and Extension Education*. Kalyani Publishers.
2. Yadava, J. S. & Mathur, P. (2018). *Issues in Agricultural Communication and Journalism*. Concept Publishing Company.
3. FAO (2020). *Agricultural Extension, Rural Advisory Services and Innovation*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization.
4. Singh, K. (2021). *Agricultural Journalism: A Tool for Farmer Empowerment*. Indian Journal of Extension Education, 57(3), 1–8.
5. Government of India (2022). *Agriculture Statistics at a Glance*. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.