Challenges and strategies for farmer-centric extension system in India

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India is an agrarian country with 160 million ha of arable land, wherein agriculture is predominantly (86%) practiced by small and marginal farmers with less than 2.00 ha area. The country's public extension system, which has so far carried the maximum burden of catering to these farmers' extension needs, is now seeking to explore new approaches and interventions to serve the farmers and address their changing needs efficiently. Both public and private extension systems and at times, the convergence efforts of both players, have been implementing many reforms to bring desirable impacts in agriculture, especially on farmers' income and sustainability. These efforts need to be complemented by the development of farmer-centric models and approaches. This article captures the experiences and challenges of extension systems and discusses new approaches and interventions to empower the farmers and suggests strategies for rendering farmer-centric extension.

Keywords: Challenges, farmer-centric extension system, strategies.