

Uniqueness of the Department of Agricultural Extension

The Department of Agricultural Extension at *Palli Siksha Bhavana, Visva-Bharati* holds a distinct and nationally significant position in agricultural education, research, and rural development in India. Its uniqueness lies in the harmonious integration of Tagore's rural reconstruction philosophy with modern extension science.

1. Legacy of Rural Reconstruction

The department is deeply rooted in the ideals of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, who envisioned education as a tool for holistic rural transformation. Unlike conventional extension departments, it evolved within the broader framework of Sriniketan's Rural Reconstruction Movement, making community engagement, village development, and social upliftment its core strength.

2. Strong Experiential Learning Orientation

A hallmark of the department is its field-based and experiential pedagogy. Through programmes like RAWES (Rural Awareness Work Experience), students do not merely study extension theories but live and work with farming communities, gaining real-life

exposure to rural institutions, farming systems, gender roles, and socio-economic realities.

3. Integration of Social Sciences with Agriculture

The department uniquely blends:

- Agricultural science
- Rural sociology
- Development economics
- Communication and behavioural sciences

This interdisciplinary approach enables students and researchers to address complex human dimensions of agriculture, which is often missing in purely technology-driven agricultural education.

4. Emphasis on Participatory and People-Centred Extension

The department strongly promotes:

- Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
- Farmer-to-Farmer Extension
- Gender-sensitive extension approaches
- Community-led innovation systems

Such approaches ensure that farmers are treated as partners and co-creators of knowledge, not passive recipients.

5. Focus on Marginal, Tribal and Smallholder Farming Systems

Located in a region dominated by small, marginal and tribal farmers, the department has developed strong expertise in:

- Inclusive extension strategies
- Livelihood-based extension models
- Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) and SCSP-linked interventions

This regional relevance gives the department a grassroots credibility and policy relevance.

6. Strong Research Orientation with Societal Impact

Research undertaken by the department is not confined to academic output alone. It addresses real-world issues such as:

- Technology adoption and diffusion
- Climate change adaptation in agriculture
- Gender mainstreaming
- ICTs in extension
- Extension system reforms

The outcomes often inform policy, development programmes, and extension strategies.

7. National-Level Academic and Extension Contribution

As part of a Central University of national importance, the department contributes to:

- Capacity building of extension professionals
- Development of extension curricula
- Training of farmers, rural youth, and extension workers

Its graduates serve in academia, research organizations, development agencies, government services, and NGOs across the country.

8. Unique Humanistic and Value-Based Education

True to Visva-Bharati's ethos, the department emphasizes:

- Ethical extension practice
- Social responsibility
- Empathy and service orientation

This humanistic foundation distinguishes its graduates as socially sensitive and professionally competent extension professionals.