

# **Extension Service Delivery Through The Lens of Farmers And Fisherfolks**

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**Abstract:** *This study assessed the effectiveness of agricultural and fishery extension service delivery in the Province of Davao del Sur, Philippines, from the perspective of farmers and fisherfolks. Anchored on the devolution of agricultural functions under Executive Order 138 (Mandanas-Garcia ruling), the research evaluated demographic characteristics, satisfaction levels in planning, project implementation, and monitoring services, engagement levels (awareness, availment, and adoption), and perceived issues in service delivery. A total of 1,329 respondents were selected through purposive sampling from nine municipalities and one city. Data were gathered through validated survey instruments using face-to-face interviews and analyzed using frequency counts and percentages.*

*Findings revealed that while nearly half of the respondents expressed positive satisfaction toward extension services, more than half reported limited or no participation across planning, implementation, and monitoring activities. Engagement levels in awareness, availment, and adoption remained low, with a significant proportion reporting no contact with extension workers. Results indicate a critical need to intensify outreach, strengthen LGU-academe partnerships, improve manpower allocation, and adopt inclusive and technology-driven extension strategies.*

**Keywords:** Agricultural extension, farmers, fisherfolks, LGUs, engagement, satisfaction, Philippines

## Introduction

Agricultural extension services play a crucial role in improving farm productivity, food security, and rural livelihoods. In the Philippines, the devolution of agricultural functions to Local Government Units (LGUs) under Executive Order 138, following the Mandanas-Garcia ruling, has shifted primary responsibility for extension services to provincial, municipal, and city governments. These services are guided by the National Agriculture and Fishery Modernization and Industrialization Plan (NAFMIP) and Provincial Commodity Investment Plans (PCIPs), in line with Republic Act 8435 (Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act) and Republic Act 7160 (Local Government Code).

Despite policy mandates, persistent issues in accessibility, participation, and adoption of extension programs remain evident. Understanding the beneficiaries' perspectives is vital in evaluating whether devolved systems effectively respond to local needs.

This study assessed extension service delivery in Davao del Sur through the lens of farmers and fisherfolks, identifying satisfaction levels, engagement patterns, and service gaps to inform evidence-based policy recommendations.

### *Objectives of the Study*

This study aimed to assess the delivery of agricultural and fishery extension services in the Province of Davao del Sur from the perspective of farmers and fisherfolks. Specifically, it sought to:

1. **Describe the demographic profile** of farmers and fisherfolks, including age, gender, education, civil status, membership to organized groups, and training exposure.
2. **Determine the level of satisfaction** of farmers and fisherfolks regarding the planning, implementation, and monitoring of extension programs.
3. **Identify the level of engagement** of farmers and fisherfolks in extension services in terms of awareness, availment, and adoption of programs, projects, and activities.
4. **Examine the problems and issues** encountered by farmers and fisherfolks in accessing extension services.
5. **Provide evidence-based recommendations** to enhance the effectiveness, inclusivity, and sustainability of extension service delivery in collaboration with LGUs, academe, and other stakeholders.

## Review of Related Literature

Extension systems globally aim to bridge knowledge gaps between research institutions and farming communities. The World Bank recommends an extension worker-to-farmer ratio of 1:500–800 to ensure effective service delivery.

Participatory planning enhances ownership and program sustainability. Studies indicate that farmer engagement increases when:

- Needs are assessed inclusively
- Programs provide direct economic benefits
- Extension agents maintain regular visitation
- Monitoring mechanisms provide feedback loops
- Trust and social capital are established

However, heterogeneous farmer populations pose engagement challenges. Limited manpower, weak institutional linkages, and insufficient funding often result in uneven service delivery.

## Methodology

### Research Design

A quantitative descriptive research design was employed.

### Respondents and Sampling

The study involved 1,329 farmers and fisherfolks from nine municipalities and one city in Davao del Sur. Purposive sampling was utilized, drawing respondents from:

- Members of associations/cooperatives
- Registered and unregistered farmers (RSBSA)
- Registered fisherfolks (Fish-R)

### Data Collection

Data were collected through:

- Face-to-face interviews
- Validated survey questionnaires
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

### Data Analysis

Data were encoded and analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. Satisfaction levels were measured using a 5-point Likert scale.

## Results and Discussion

### A. Demographic Profile of Respondents

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Farmers and Fisherfolks (n = 1,329)**

Variable	Category	Percentage
Age	50–59 years	28.82%
Gender	Male	53.35%
Education	High School Graduate	30.55%
Civil Status	Married	74.49%
Religion	Roman Catholic	75.02%
Dialect	Cebuano	87.36%
Trained	Yes	27.99%
Organization Member	Yes	30.40%

The findings reveal an aging agricultural population, with most respondents between 50–59 years old. The dominance of male respondents aligns with traditional gender roles in agriculture. Notably, 72.01% were not trained, and 69.60% were not members of organized groups, suggesting limited institutional engagement. These indicators imply vulnerability to technological stagnation and limited collective bargaining power.

**B. Satisfaction Levels on Extension Services**

**Table 2: Summary of Satisfaction Ratings Across Extension Service Areas**

Service Area	Positive Rating (FS, S, VS)	Negative Rating (NS)
Planning	50%	50.79%
Project Implementation	45–50%	43–48%
Monitoring & Evaluation	50%	46–49%

Approximately half of the respondents expressed satisfaction in planning, project implementation, and monitoring services. However, a comparable proportion reported dissatisfaction, primarily due to lack of participation and limited communication.

In planning services, 50.79% reported non-participation, citing insufficient information dissemination and limited venues. This undermines participatory governance principles under RA 8435.

In project implementation, while some recognized the competence of extension workers, nearly half reported no involvement in projects. This indicates coverage limitations and possible manpower constraints.

Monitoring and evaluation services showed similar polarization. Farmers who received visits expressed satisfaction, while those not visited reported complete dissatisfaction, emphasizing the importance of consistent field presence.

**C. Engagement Levels in Extension Services**

**Table 3: Level of Engagement of Farmers/Fisherfolks**

Engagement Dimension	Always	Sometimes	Never (Average)
Awareness	24–35%	20%	Majority
Availment	18–31%	13–23%	59.30%
Adoption	15–30%	15–23%	60%

Engagement levels reveal a critical gap:

- Only one-fourth consistently demonstrate awareness.
- Nearly 60% never availed extension services.
- Around 60% never adopted extension interventions.

Low adoption suggests either limited perceived benefit, lack of trust, or insufficient technical follow-through. Adoption increases when programs provide direct economic returns and are facilitated by trusted agents.

The heterogeneity of farmers necessitates differentiated strategies rather than uniform service approaches.

**D. Problems and Issues Identified**

**Table 4: Reported Problems in Extension Service Delivery**

Problem Identified	Frequency	Percentage
No idea of Extension Worker presence	326	24.53%
Never received extension services	341	25.66%
Not approached by Extension Workers	242	18.21%
No training/capability building received	455	34.24%
Never visited	319	24.00%

The most alarming issue is that 34.24% reported no training or capability-building activities. Additionally, approximately one-fourth of respondents were unaware of extension workers' presence.

These findings suggest:

- Insufficient extension manpower
- Weak information dissemination systems
- Inadequate monitoring frameworks
- Limited outreach to farm laborers

The results reinforce the need to adopt the recommended extension worker-to-farmer ratio and to strengthen institutional partnerships.

## **Conclusion**

The study reveals structural and operational gaps in extension service delivery in Davao del Sur. While nearly half of the farmers and fisherfolks expressed satisfaction with extension services, a significant proportion remain disengaged and underserved.

Low participation in planning, weak project involvement, limited monitoring, and minimal adoption indicate systemic challenges in manpower allocation, communication, and inclusivity.

The findings underscore the urgent need to intensify extension services, strengthen LGU–academe–industry collaboration, expand training coverage, and adopt digital and cluster-based agricultural development strategies.

## **Recommendations**

1. Adopt the 1:500–800 extension worker-to-farmer ratio standard.
2. Increase LGU agricultural budget allocation in compliance with RA 7160.
3. Strengthen LGU–State Universities and Colleges partnerships.
4. Institutionalize farmer clustering and consolidation programs.
5. Promote digital agriculture and Agriculture 4.0 technologies.
6. Expand capability-building programs, especially for non-member and laborer groups.
7. Improve monitoring and visitation schedules prior to cropping seasons.

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