

## MAHILA AAROGYAM KAKSH

In a country where women's health has historically taken a backseat due to socio-economic challenges, the launch and promotion of Mahila Aarogyam Kaksh marks a transformative step towards inclusive and gender-sensitive healthcare. Literally translated as "Women's Health Room," Mahila Aarogyam Kaksh is a dedicated space within public health facilities, aimed at addressing the unique healthcare needs of women in a holistic and dignified manner. This initiative is rapidly gaining recognition as an effective model to improve access to essential health services for women, especially in rural and underserved areas.

The concept of Mahila Aarogyam Kaksh aligns with the broader goals of the National Health Mission (NHM) and Ayushman Bharat, which focus on universal health coverage and strengthening primary health infrastructure. These Kaksh units are typically established in district hospitals, community health centers (CHCs), and primary health centers (PHCs), with the core objective of providing an integrated platform for preventive, promotive, diagnostic, and curative healthcare services to women of all age groups.

One of the most significant aspects of Mahila Aarogyam Kaksh is its commitment to privacy, dignity, and comfort for women patients. The Kaksh is often managed by a team of trained female healthcare professionals, including medical officers, staff nurses, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), who work together to build a trustworthy and approachable environment for women seeking care. This setup encourages women who may otherwise hesitate due to social taboos or fear of stigma to access the services they need without judgment or discomfort.

The health services provided in Mahila Aarogyam Kaksh are comprehensive in nature, addressing a wide range of issues specific to women. These include antenatal and postnatal care, menstrual health management, family planning counseling, screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), anemia detection, and screening for cervical and breast cancers. Additionally, many units are now including awareness sessions on nutrition, mental health, lifestyle diseases such as hypertension and diabetes, and gender-based violence, making it a multifaceted platform for women's empowerment through health.

One of the key goals of the Kaksh initiative is to promote preventive health-seeking behavior among women. Regular health check-ups, counseling, and awareness drives are organized to educate women about the importance of early detection and timely treatment of health conditions. This focus on prevention rather than just cure is crucial, especially in rural India, where women often delay or avoid medical attention due to cultural barriers, lack of awareness, or financial constraints.

To further enhance the reach and impact of the initiative, Mahila Aarogyam Kaksh also coordinates with other government programs such as the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), and the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK), thereby ensuring that eligible women receive entitlements and support under various welfare schemes. This integrated approach also allows for efficient monitoring and tracking of women's health indicators through digital health records and regular follow-ups.

The Kaksh has also emerged as a key point of contact for adolescent girls and young women, who are often unaware of how to access safe reproductive healthcare and counseling services. Through adolescent-friendly corners and dedicated health educators, these centers serve as a bridge to empower young women with knowledge about their bodies, menstrual hygiene, and emotional well-being.

Equally important is the emphasis on community engagement in the functioning of Mahila Aarogyam Kaksh. ASHAs and community health workers play a pivotal role in identifying women with health concerns, encouraging them to visit the Kaksh, and ensuring continuity of care. Special health camps and awareness programs are conducted at the village level, ensuring no woman is left behind in the journey toward good health.

From an administrative standpoint, the establishment of Mahila Aarogyam Kaksh represents a strategic move to bring gender-sensitive reforms into the public health system. States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Rajasthan have already begun replicating and expanding these centers, citing significant improvement in women's health outcomes and increased participation of women in regular health check-ups. The govt's efforts to provide financial support to scale this model nationwide have further boosted its success. Kaksh is not merely a physical facility within a hospital or health center-it is a powerful symbol of the country's evolving commitment to women's health and dignity.

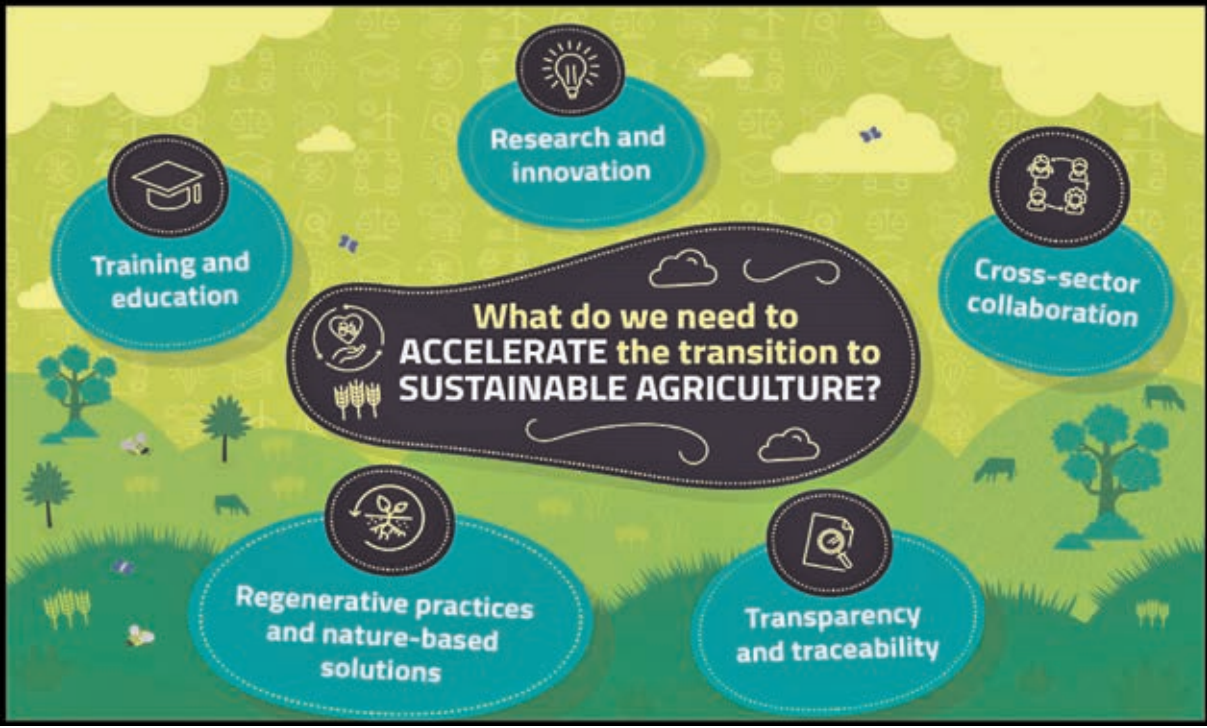
# Communication Strategies for Sustainable Agricultural Development

■ DR. BANARSI LAL AND DR. VINOD GUPTA

The world's population is expanding alarmingly which has serious implications for the number of finite resources to feed it and furthermore the amount of agricultural land is declining rapidly. It is predicted that the world's population will be around 11 billion at the end of 21st century. It has also been reported that about 75 per cent of the resource-poor people in developing countries depend on agricultural-based livelihoods. Thus, in order to feed the increasing population, farmers need to increase their farm production up to 70 per cent by 2100. Producing food in a sustainable manner is challenging task as agriculture is very sensitive and vulnerable to various climatic as well as anthropological factors. Farmers always struggle against the changing environmental circumstances and socio-economic barriers. The problem is more intense in the nations like India where agriculture is the core of the economic activity. Development is a multifaceted and normative concept. It is simply a rapid and sustained rise in real output per head and an attendant change in technological ,economic and demographic characteristics in a society. It is becoming increasingly apparent that development of any nation is not possible without rural and agricultural development. Rural development can be conceptualized as a strategy designed to improve the socio-economic life of the rural people. Agricultural development is a process of transforming agriculture from a predominantly subsistence level to an economy dominant by investment and market-oriented agriculture. Rural development is not possible without serious agricultural development. Agriculture is the main stream of Indian economy. It directly regulates the growth of economy of the nation. The main occupation of rural people in India is agriculture. As the scope for bringing more area under cultivation is limited, the only possible way to increase the crop yields is through the adoption of new and improved agricultural practices and techniques, so as to mitigate the long term food grain requirement of the country.

Communication is the vital aspect to change the behaviour of the receiver. As a matter of fact, no executive can be successful without communicating effectively with his superiors or subordinates. Messages could be in the form of words, symbols, signs, letters or actions. The importance of communication has been greatly emphasized by all the management experts. Communication is like a part of an individual's life as well as organizational existence. Its importance is self-explanatory and is having common experience of all as well. The transfer of science to rural people in India and gradual inoculation of scientific attitude in their everyday life, need to demonstrate in the language which will be understood and appreciated by the rural people. The present age has been rightly termed as an 'information age'. Information plays the significant role in our society. Information has become an integral part of our daily life. Now people want adequate and authentic information as early as possible. The mass media namely such as newspaper, radio and television are catering to this important need of people. For the rapid and overall development of a country it is important that the citizens of that country are well versed with the happenings around them. Effective communication among the agricultural stakeholders is the part and parcel of sustainable agricultural development. Development information and technologies generated for the farmers are of no use unless these reach to the ultimate users. It has been estimated that only about 30 per cent of the technologies are being received and used by the farmers. It is further added that the technologies generated today reach to the entire ultimate users in about 20 years.

Communication plays a vital role in sustainable agriculture to educate stakeholders, promote best agricultural practices and foster collaboration among farmers, consumers and policy makers. It has become a key feature of sustainable development. It is a key process in agricultural development. Indeed, communication for development has become a recognised field among many development decision makers. The agricultural development requires a timely and systematic transmission of useful and relevant agricultural information from source to the audience. It is the core activity of human association in general and progress as well as development in particular. No human life can exist in isolation. A man can survive only in society and the survival in society is possible with communication. Therefore, com-



munication is identified as the oldest continued activity of human being since birth and goes on and on till death. More precisely, communication is the basic need of human beings and web of society which makes the survival, growth, progress and development of man possible and holds the society intact and progressive. Communication is a vital part of personal life in the society. It is equally important in business, education, civilization, administration and other situations where people encounter with each other to satisfy their needs and wishes. It maintains and animates the life. It is also a motor and expression of social activity and civilization. It leads people from instinct to inspiration, through process and system of enquiry, command and control. It creates a common pool of ideas, strengthens the feeling of togetherness through the exchange of messages and translates through into action. As the world has advanced, the task of communication has become more complex. However, unless some basic structural changes are introduced, the potential benefits of technological and communication development will hardly be put at disposal of the majority of mankind.

The rural poverty and its related incidences may decline if one puts efforts for sustained growth in agricultural production .The extension/communication/dissemination system and network is the key input in increasing the performance in agricultural production. Therefore, the communication is the most powerful input which brings substantial development in socio-economic status of an individual. Present Indian extension system is under numerous pressures where the extension workers, have to cater not only vast population but also to perform administrative, election, input supply and other works. Under these circumstances, it is not practically possible to serve all the farmers, all the time for all the problems when ratio of extension worker and farmer; the sender and receiver is more than 1:1000. Thus, the potential of mass media can be exploited to serve the rural population in this direction. Electronisation and mechanization in communication systems have provided opportunity to access the information rapidly, accurately and repeatedly. To reach the unreach modern electronic gadgets and systems have been introduced to cope-up the requirements. The government of India has realized the need and utility of these electronic equipments for rural population. Therefore, massive programmes of cyber extension, digital interactive distance learning, online networks, computers aided multimedia, internet and free online telephones etc. have been launched for the farmers. Some of the major extension technology systems and approaches are being used presently like call centre, Cyber Extension, ATIC, computer-internet connectivity etc.

In the ancient era farming communities shared agricultural

practices through their traditional communication methods whereas today's farming practices are highly modernised and require a geographic information system, global positioning system, computer control automated system, automated milking etc. Thus farmers need to adapt Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) which is the fundamental tools of effective communication and offer information about good agronomic practices, transportation, marketing, weather information etc. It has been observed that the individual, group and social media play a significant role in sustainable agricultural development. The use of present extension and communication technology system is based on the initiative of the farmers-the receiver itself. This is possible only when the farmer is conversant with the knowledge of handling system, approach etc. about present communication technology system as well as the positive attitude towards the system. In view of the progressive farmers, its use is judicious as they have high level of positive communication behaviour has resulted the desired results in their agricultural profession. As far as the farmers of remote areas are concerned they are traditionalist-hardliners and shy in nature with poor communication behaviour. They hesitate to ask recent information.

National development is the mission of all the nations across the globe and to attain this laudable objective can be achieved with the agricultural and rural development. In this perspective human resources can be developed through the use of mass media. Communication in agriculture is not only to inform and create awareness among the farmers but also to implement new ideas that change the mode of farming. Village extension workers inform the farmers about the new technologies, but they are not keeping pace with the advancement of technical know-how. Secondly, the message has to travel through many stages from its source to the ultimate users. Due to this hierarchical transfer sometimes it loses its meaning and originality. The research is the continuous process with changing scenario of developmental process. Number of researches had been conducted in the field of dissemination of information, communication and extension systems on fundamental, applied and other issues of developmental process. Introduction of latest interactive communication technology among the rural population has opened a new vista of researchers to find out viability, acquaintance, accessibility, satisfaction, constraints and many more issues of the launched electronic communication technology and systems. Mixed media strategy can be adopted. Traditional folk media can be integrated with the modern conventional media.

(The writers Dr. Banarsi Lal is Chief Scientist & Head of KVK Reasi and Dr. Vinod Gupta is Professor & Head, Division of Agricultural Extension Education, SKUAST-J)

# Vanishing Dogri: Who's Saving Jammu's Mother Tongue?

■ NIYATI



mother tongue of the Dogra community.

What happens when a language fades from homes, schools, and streets? Can a community survive when its mother tongue is no longer spoken, written, or sung? These are urgent questions facing Jammu, where Dogri-the indigenous language of the region-is fighting a battle against indifference, urbanization, and linguistic elitism.

This is the story of a language on the verge, but also the story of resistance-of poets, professors, podcasters, and ordinary people refusing to let Dogri disappear quietly.

**What is Dogri and Why Does It Matter?**

Dogri is an Indo-Aryan language spoken primarily in the Jammu region of Jammu & Kashmir and parts of Himachal Pradesh. It belongs to the Western Pahari group and shares linguistic features with Punjabi, Hindi, and other North Indian languages.

Historically, Dogri was the language of the Dogra kings, warriors, saints, and artists. It carries within it a treasure trove of folklore, Bhajans, riddles, and oral traditions that define the cultural identity of Dogra people-Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs alike.

In 2003, Dogri received national recognition when it was included in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, giving it the status of an official language. Yet, 21 years later, the question remains: how many of us are still speaking it?

**Decline in Use: What the Numbers Say**

The 2011 Census of India reported that over 2.6 million people identified Dogri as their mother tongue. But the real picture is bleaker: According to language experts from Jammu University, less than 30% of urban Dogra families speak Dogri at home. In schools, Dogri is offered as an optional subject, but student enrollment is alarmingly low-barely 1 in 50 students

chooses it. In mainstream media-TV, newspapers, cinema-Dogri is nearly absent, replaced by Hindi, Punjabi, or Urdu.

Dr. Anuradha Sharma, a linguist at the Central Institute of Indian Languages, says, "The data hides more than it reveals. Many people list Dogri on paper but speak Hindi in daily life. This shift is most pronounced among the youth."

**Reasons Behind the Decline**

**a. Urban Aspiration & Linguistic Shame**

Many young parents in Jammu prefer speaking Hindi or English with their children, believing it gives them an edge in education and employment. "I don't want my son to be mocked for his accent," says Rajesh Gupta, a banker in Gandhi Nagar. "We only speak English at home." Dogri is increasingly seen as rustic, backward, or unsuitable for professional settings. This linguistic stigma has deeply impacted the confidence of the younger generation.

**b. Education System**

While Dogri is recognized in school curricula, it remains optional and poorly promoted. Textbooks are outdated, and trained teachers are scarce.

"There's no incentive. Dogri doesn't help in competitive exams, and job prospects are zero," says Priya Slathia, a college student.

**c. Digital & Cultural Displacement**

In a world driven by reels, hashtags, and AI bots, Dogri struggles to find relevance. With most content consumed in Hindi and English, regional languages like Dogri are falling through the cracks of digital literacy.

Culture and Media: Missing in Action

Unlike Punjabi or Bengali, Dogri has had a limited cinematic presence. A few songs, movies, or web series have been produced in the language.

The iconic "Geetru" and "Bhakh"-Dogri folk performance forms-are fading.

AIR Jammu runs limited Dogri programming. Doordarshan's Dogri news bulletin is poorly timed and has negligible viewership.

This cultural vacuum has created a disconnect between language and pride. Without stories, songs, or stars in Dogri, the youth have little emotional bond with it.

**Who is Saving Dogri? The Unsung Heroes**

Despite the odds, there is a growing resistance-

a quiet revolution led by educators, poets, NGOs, and digital creators who refuse to give up on their linguistic heritage.

**Voices and Visionaries: A Cultural Insider Speaks**

?Sunny Dua, a well-known media professional and columnist from Jammu, underscores the complex cultural proximity between Dogri and Punjabi, particularly in border regions like Kathua and Samba.

"Punjab, being our neighbouring state, has had a major influence on our culture. You'll notice that our marriages begin with traditional Dogri Baakh and end with energetic Punjabi Bhangra," he says with a smile. "People from Kathua and Samba have married into Punjabi families and naturally adopted some of the language and traditions. But somewhere along the line, Dogri started getting overshadowed."

Sunny emphasizes that while multicultural interaction enriches identity, it should not come at the cost of linguistic erasure.

"We need god-gifted artists, not just average writers churning out run-of-the-mill songs or couplets. We must invest in quality music, global-standard literature, and cultural storytelling in Dogri that can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with any world language."

He advocates for stronger cultural investment in training, publishing, and performing arts-to revive Dogri not just as a heritage language, but as a living, evolving creative force.

**Academia and Institutions**

Jammu University has a dedicated Department of Dogri offering MA, MPhil, and PhD programs.

The Sahitya Akademi regularly publishes Dogri books and awards Dogri writers.

The Dogri Sanstha Jammu, established in 1944, continues to host literary seminars and book fairs.

Dr. Lalit Mangotra, Dogri Sahitya Akademi awardee, says, "A language dies when it stops growing. We need to write new poems, new dramas, and use new platforms."

**Writers and Poets**

Contemporary Dogri poets like Ved Rahi, Shivrath, Padma Sachdev, and new-age lyricists are reviving the language through modern metaphors. Padma Sachdev's poems, in particu-

lar, have become cultural touchstones.

"Her work made me fall in love with Dogri again," says college student Bhavna Sharma, who now runs an Instagram poetry page in Dogri.

**Digital Crusaders**

With Gen Z spending most of their time online, a new crop of content creators is taking Dogri to Instagram, YouTube, and Spotify. @DogriDuniya - A meme and reel page with over 30,000 followers, mixing humor with language awareness.

Podcast "Dogri Bol Chaal" - Hosted by students of Cluster University, the podcast breaks down Dogri idioms, love songs, and grandma tales.

Dogri Rap - In 2023, local rapper Yuvraj aka Dogra Boi released a Dogri-Punjabi rap on YouTube that went viral with 1 million+ views.

This section naturally enhances the feature's focus by contextualizing how cultural assimilation, especially in border districts, is contributing to the dilution of Dogri-and what kind of creative renaissance is needed to counter that trend.

**Government's Role: Too Little, Too Late?**

While Dogri is now an official language of J&K under the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Act, 2020, actual implementation is patchy.

Very few government offices use Dogri in signage, forms, or official communication.

No major government TV or radio channel broadcasts in Dogri during prime time. The JKBOSE (Board of School Education) has not made Dogri compulsory even in Jammu schools.

"Recognition without implementation is tokenism," says senior journalist Ashutosh Raina. "Dogri needs a policy push-not just poetic praise."

What Needs to Be Done? Solutions from the Ground

**a. Make Dogri a Functional Language**

Include Dogri in government recruitment, local administration, and public announcements. Make it visible on road signs, railway stations, and schools.

**b. Dogri in Tech**

Create Dogri language keyboards, OCR tools, and machine translation models to bring it into the digital mainstream.

The tech-savvy Dogra youth should be encouraged to build apps and games in Dogri, like "Kheti-Bari" (a farming sim in Dogri dialect).

**c. Media & Cinema Investment**

Encourage regional filmmakers and streaming platforms like Zee5 and Netflix to host Dogri content. Government film grants should be made language-sensitive, not just project-based.

**d. School-Level Reforms**

Make Dogri compulsory up to Class 5 in Jammu region schools. Provide modern textbooks, interactive teaching, and digital Dogri learning modules.

**Voices of the People**

To understand the emotional connection Dogras feel toward their language, we spoke to several individuals across age groups: Sunita Bhagat, 32, homemaker:

"My daughter didn't even know what 'Kandoli Mata' means. I felt ashamed. I now speak only Dogri at home."

Iqbal Choudhary, 40, Gujjar community member:

"Dogri unites us across religion. It's our Jammu identity."

Raghav Slathia, 21, college student:

"I speak English at college, but my best jokes only land in Dogri!" Shiv Dev Singh, 75, poet: "Languages are not taught, they are caught. Let children hear Dogri every day."

**A Language Is More Than Words**

When a language dies, it doesn't just take away words-it takes away worldviews, wisdom, songs, lullabies, recipes, and dreams.

Dogri is not merely a dialect spoken by some people in Jammu. It is the soul of the Duggar identity. Its survival is not just the responsibility of scholars or the government-but of every parent, student, and citizen who cares about where they come from.

Reviving Dogri will take effort, creativity, and courage-to speak it, write it, teach it, and love it in everyday life.

As the saying goes in Dogri: "Jinney Boli Chhaddi, Ussne Aap Chhaddiya" ("He who abandons his language, abandons himself.")

(The writer is MA Journalism student of Jammu University)

