

**A QUICK EVALUATION STUDY OF TRAINING  
& VISITS SYSTEM - 1982**

1. **The Study**

It was with a view to rectify the shortcomings of the prevalent agricultural extension programmes that the training and visits system (T&V System) was introduced in 1973-74. Initiated on a pilot basis in the command areas of Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, the system was adopted gradually by more states. By 1976, the system was in operation in 12 states and some specific command areas in Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

The main objectives of the T&V system were (a) to disseminate recommended agricultural practices and information about advances made in agricultural technology to the farmers, and (b) to learn more about the major problems relating to pests and diseases of the local crops, difficulties of the farmers in getting supplies of inputs etc. The implementing machinery consisted of Directors of Agriculture or Secretary in the Agricultural Department at the State level, Joint Director/Deputy Directors/Principal Agricultural Officer assisted by Subject Matter Specialists (SMS) at the district level, and Sub-Divisional Agricultural Officers, SMS and Village Level Workers (VLWs) at the sub-divisional level. The strategy of agricultural development was planned at the State level and the recommended practices were communicated to the responsible officers at the divisional, district and sub-divisional levels. The VLW was to be the main functionary of the system. He was expected to visit 8 to 10 villages under his jurisdiction once a fortnight on fixed days. During his visits, he was to learn the major difficulties of the farmers and then refer them to the higher authorities and the agricultural research stations. He was also required to meet 8-10 'contact farmers' per village-who, in turn, were expected to disseminate the knowledge that they gained. The VLWs were to be trained and supervised by the Agricultural Extension officers (AEOs) and SMS at the sub-divisional level. Apart from VLWs, the officers at sub-divisional level and district level also received training. Thus, the regular training of the officers and their visits to the areas under their jurisdiction were to be two major planks of the T&V system. The World Bank was to share 49 to 50% of the operational cost of the scheme. The WB

assistance was to be utilized mainly for training of personnel, construction of offices and staff quarters, purchase of vehicles and salary of the staff. Prompted by the increasing adoption of the scheme, it was felt by the Planning Commission that an assessment of the working of the system should be made to study its impact. The Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO), accordingly, undertook a quick and concurrent evaluation study of the scheme and published its report in December, 1982.

## **2. Objectives**

- i) To study the extent of coverage of areas in different states;
- ii) To assess the current position of the working of the system and problems faced in its implementation; and
- iii) To review the changes brought about in the farm practices, if any, by the T&V system.

## **3. Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of Sample**

The study covered 12 districts, 4 command areas, 14 blocks and 20 villages spread over 13 states. The field teams were requested to select and visit one or two development blocks in each selected district near their Headquarters. In each block, the field teams were asked to visit two-three villages and to hold discussions with contact and non-contact farmers.

## **4. Reference Period**

The field work was conducted during August-November, 1981. The period for which the data were collected ranged from 1974-75 to 1980-81.

## **5. Main Findings**

1. Most of the State Governments increased the area coverage of the scheme (the T&V system) in a phased manner. However, the scheme was spread in all the districts of Haryana, Orissa and West Bengal in the initial year itself.

2. Special staff were appointed at the state, divisional, district and sub-divisional levels for implementation of the scheme. Majority of the technical posts were filled in. However, vacancies of SMS at different levels were reported from some states. The pay scales of the specialist officers were not uniform across states.

3. Majority of the VLWs, as required under the scheme, underwent pre-service training. However, a fair number of them were still untrained owing to the paucity of training institutions. The syllabus prescribed by the World Bank was followed for these training courses.

4. Senior Officers did not pay regular visits to their concerned villages, nor did they send sufficient time in the villages during their visits. This was mainly due to inadequate arrangements for conveyance. The construction of staff quarters near their place of work was taken up in some states, but at a slow pace. VLWs and AEOs complained that their assigned area of jurisdiction was too big to do justice to their assigned duties.

5. The State Governments had spent smaller amounts in the initial year than in 1980-81. The major reasons for the shortfall in expenditure were procedural delays in appointments, non-availability of qualified personnel, delay and difficulties in construction of new quarters and repair of old ones, and delay in the sanction and release of funds to the State Governments.

6. Co-ordination committees were formed at the state and district levels in most of the states. Regional Committees were also formed in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. The number of meetings of the district level Committees held in 1980-81 was not adequate.

7. The hurdles which stood in the way of the implementation of the T&V system included delay in the sanction of the scheme, delay in filling up the vacancies, lack of qualified staff, requirement to the staff for work other than T&V work, lacunae in the selection of contact farmers and the inadequate attention paid by the contact farmers in educating non-contact farmers, excessive area jurisdiction of the workers, insufficient arrangements for conveyance, non-availability of residential quarters near the areas of the jurisdiction of VLWs and AEOs, difficulties in getting recommended farm inputs and in organising training camps, non-acceptance of VLWs by knowledgeable farmers as a competent person to teach them and delay in sanction and release of funds.

8. Notwithstanding these difficulties, some definite positive trends in respect of adoption of improved agricultural practices were visible since the introduction of the T&V system. The officials as well as farmers felt that the T&V system, as an extension

programme, was definitely an improvement over the earlier systems. The toil of the VLWs brought about some attitudinal changes in the farmers, which were manifested in various forms like the adoption of improved farming methods in Assam and Maharashtra, introduction of new crops in Gujarat, Karnataka and Kerala, attempts at multiple cropping in some states and the use of improved seeds in Maharashtra.

9. Increase in the cost of inputs, difficulties in obtaining them, lack of irrigation facilities, etc. hindered the adoption of the new messages by the farmers. Most of the states reported only partial adoption of seed rates, sowing methods and application of fertilizers. The availability of inputs rested with the block machinery and not with the T&V agents. This also created hurdle in the adoption of recommended practices.

#### **6. Major Suggestions**

1. The pace of the area coverage of the T&V system needs to be accelerated.

2. A unified and rational pattern of staffing should be evolved for the system. The vacancies are to be urgently filled in.

3. It should be ensured that the training camps at various levels are held periodically, that the records of their proceedings are maintained meticulously and that regular returns of these meetings are sent to the next higher level for review and record.

4. Jurisdictions of the functionaries particularly at the lower levels are to be rationalized, if possible, on the basis of a study of the time and movements involved in each operational area.

5. For better area coverage, loans on a liberal basis for purchase of cycles, etc. by the AEOs and VLWs may be provided. Construction of staff quarters in the rural areas should be stressed.

6. The selection of contact farmers should be attended to by the AEO, DAO and SMS at the village level in consultation with the VLWs and village institutions.

7. A regular follow-up of the pattern of adoption of improved practices by non-contact farmers has to be made on a limited scale. In the light of such follow-up, necessary orientation needs to be given to the contact farmers regarding their assigned role.

8. The sanction and release of funds should be in time to ensure fuller utilization of scheme funds.

9. Co-ordination Committees should be constituted at various levels and their regular functioning should be ensured. It should also be ensured that data on various aspects of the scheme are provided through periodic returns.

10. The Monitoring and Evaluation Cells of the scheme should, inter-alia, take up after the completion of each crop season, a quick evaluation of the implementation of the scheme and its impact