

**STUDY OF NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION AND
FARMERS' EDUCATION PROGRAMME - 1978**

1. The Study

Initiated separately in 1965 and 1966 respectively, the National Demonstration (ND) Programme which was intended to induce farmers to adopt the novel techniques of cultivation by way of convincing demonstrations and the Farmers' Training (FT) Programme, which was to train farmers in the latest agricultural techniques were integrated in 1970. At the instance of the Planning Commission, the Programme Evaluation Organisation undertook an evaluation study of the integrated programme in 1971-72 and its report was brought out in 1978.

2. Objectives

- i) To examine the implementation of the various components of the programme and the problems regarding organisation and coordination thereto.
- ii) To ascertain the reactions and attitudes of the beneficiaries of the programme.
- iii) To see how far the Farmers' Education (F.E) Programme (ND & FT programmes together) was integrated with the overall agricultural production programme.

3. Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of Sample

The sampling design for the study was a multi-stage sampling design with states as strata. The States, districts and villages selected for the study were those where the programme had been operating for about three years prior to 1971-72. One to three districts which satisfied the above criterion were selected from each chosen State. In each selected district, the villages were categorised into the following groups;

- 1) Villages covered by National Demonstration (N.D.) Programme only.
- 2) Villages covered by short term training programme only;

- 3) Villages covered by Farmers' Discussion Group only;
- 4) Villages covered by N.D. programme and short term training.
- 5) Villages covered by N.D. Programme and Discussion Groups.
- 6) Villages covered by short-term training and Discussion Groups.
- 7) Villages covered by all three components of the programme.

One village was selected at random from each category. A sample of 14 beneficiary households was chosen at random from each selected village. All beneficiaries in the selected households were canvassed. Three non-participating households were also selected from each chosen village to serve as control. In all, the study covered 15 States, 31 districts, 133 villages, 1834 beneficiary households and 532 non-beneficiary households.

4. Reference Period

The survey was conducted in the last quarter of 1972 and the data were collected for the year 1971-1972.

5. Main Findings

1. Judged in terms of the adoption of the various improved practices taught, the impact of the Farmers' Education Programme was marginal. This was due mainly to the improper selection of trainees, the improper selection of areas for demonstration and the bias in favour of bigger farmers for laying demonstration plots.

2. Unduly theoretical and technical nature of the training programme, dearth of qualified and experienced staff, lack of co-ordination among the staff of the two programmes and pre-occupation with merely quantitative achievements with utter neglect of quality aspect etc. made the training less efficacious.

3. The Discussion Groups, named Churchamandals, which were to function as a two-way communication channel between the farming community and the specialist on the one hand and radio and the Discussion Groups on the

other, were either defunct or non-existent. Lack of sincerity of purpose of the Group members, who sometimes had the sole objective of acquiring a radio set at a subsidised rate coupled with the apathetic approach of the F.T.centres towards the Discussion Groups resulted in this sorry State.

4. Absence of any worthwhile follow-up measures to supplement the training left the trained farmers unable to apply the recommended practices. To add to this, the co-ordination committees could not intertwine the working of the N.D.programme and the F.T.Programme. Higher level supervision of the field activity was also lacking.

6. **Major Suggestions**

1. It is absolutely imperative to develop an awareness among the implementing agencies of the facts that the N.D. and F.T. Programmes are an integral part of the agricultural production programme and that the mere emphasis on physical targets is immaterial. Supervisory level officials should get directly involved in the execution of the programme, instead of it being left to the fancies of the field staff. Field staff must be in requisite numbers and of requisite quality.

2. There should be functional co-ordination between the staff of the N.D. programme and the F.T. programme and also between the F.E.Programme and the usual agricultural extension agencies of the district. Concerted follow-up action should be taken after the F.T.Programme are in operation, one co-ordination committee would suffice for both.

3. Different syllabi must be devised to cater to different types of farmers. The method of training must be modified to rely more on practical demonstrations and the use of audio-visual teaching aids than on pedantic theoretical expositions.

4. The selection of areas for laying demonstrations should essentially be on the basis of potential for adoption of recommended practices. The recommended practices, in turn, must be tailored to suit the conditions prevalent in the area.

5. Instead of retaining the Discussion Groups as officially sponsored and subsidised organisations, they may be encouraged to function as purely voluntary bodies duly recognised by Govt subject to the conditions that

the Group conveners are capable and properly trained, that free farm literature and stationery are supplied only on specific requests by Discussion Groups on a year to year basis etc. The subsidy on radio receivers as incentives to conveners should be dispensed with. Instead, a part of the prize money for the best Discussion Group should be earmarked for the convener as an incentive.