

STUDY OF  
NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION  
&  
FARMERS' EDUCATION PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME EVALUATION ORGANISATION  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
1978

REPORT OF THE EVALUATION STUDY OF NATIONAL  
DEMONSTRATION & FARMERS' EDUCATION PROGRAMME

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	(i)
Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations	(iii)
Chapter I - Introduction	1
Chapter II - Farmers' Training Programme	10
Chapter III - Charchamandals (Farmers' Discussion Groups)	32
Chapter IV - National Demonstration Programme ..	46
Chapter V - Coordination	70
Appendix - Project Team	71
Annexure Tables	73

.....

## PREFACE

Realising the need for demonstrating the efficacy of the new agricultural practices based on scientific knowledge, information and skill and channelising the results of research immediately to the farmers, the Government of India launched the National Demonstration Programme in April, 1965. This was followed by the Farmers Education and Training Programme initiated by the Directorate of Extension of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation in 1966-67. In 1970 the two programmes were integrated in the districts which were common to both.

At the instance of the Planning Commission the Programme Evaluation Organisation undertook an evaluation study of the National Demonstration and Farmers Education Programme in 1971-72. The Study enquired into the implementation of (i) short-term training programme for farmers and farm women, and (ii) programme for organising discussion group of farmers and farm women under the Farmers Training Programme as well as the National Demonstration Programme. Fifteen States where the Centrally sponsored programme of National Demonstration and Farmers Education had been in operation for about three years prior to the taking up of the Study, were selected.

For various administrative reasons the publication of the Report has got delayed. However, the conclusions emerging from this Study would still have relevance since the two programmes continue to form important planks in the country's overall strategy of agricultural extension in the Five Year Plan 1976-83. It is hoped that the findings of the Study would be of practical use to policy framers and implementing agencies.

ii)

The Study has been designed by the Agricultural Economics Division of the P.E.O. The data analysis and drafting of Report was undertaken by Shri S.B.Saharya, Joint Director assisted by Shri V.V.Jetley, Senior Research Officer and Shri P.N.Deb, Research Officer. The support provided by other officers of this Division, the Regional and Field units and the Computer Centre is formally acknowledged. We are grateful for the cooperation and help extended by the officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and the State Governments.

New Delhi  
June 1978

S.P.Bagla  
Joint Secretary  
PROGRAMME EVALUATION ORGANISATION

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONSI. Background  
of the  
Study

The Farmers' Education Programme includes the National Demonstration Programme and the Farmers' Training Programme. The National Demonstration (ND) Programme was launched in 1965 primarily with the aim of encouraging cultivators to adopt the latest agricultural techniques by convincingly showing to them the practicability of and benefits from adopting these. This was to be achieved by holding demonstrations in farmers' fields, conducted in intensive agriculture districts, by a team of 4 Subject Matter Specialists (SMS) under the aegis, as far as possible, of an agricultural institute such as a university, college or research station. Initiated in 1965 by the Directorate of Extension of the Central Ministry of Agriculture, the programme came under the supervision of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) from 1967. At the time of the Study, the programme was in operation in 100 intensive agricultural districts in the country.

2. The Directorate of Extension also launched in 1966 the Farmers' Training (FT) Programme as a scheme for training farmers in the latest techniques in agriculture in support of programmes for agricultural production like the HYV Programme. At the time of the Study the F.T. Programme, comprising both institutional and peripatetic training in agricultural and allied topics, was being conducted by 100 F.T. Centres, established under the programme, covering about as many districts throughout the country. The F.T.

Programme also included a scheme for establishing village level Farmers Discussion Groups (Charchamandals), both male and female, as forums for continuing education in agricultural and allied subjects primarily through the medium of the farm broadcasts of All India Radio. The Discussion Groups were to function under the leadership of a convenor trained for purpose under the programme.

3.- The PED had studied the Centrally sponsored programme of National Demonstration & Farmers' Education in 15 States where this had been in operation for about 3 years ending in 1971-72. During the course of the Study detailed enquiries were made from the State down to the farmer's levels in 31 districts. The Study covered questions regarding implementatic of the various components of the programme and the problems regarding organisation and coordination thereto; the reactions and attitudes of cultivators getting trained under the programme; and the extent of integration of the Farmers' Education Programme with the overall agricultural production programme.

## II. Summary of (A) Farmers' Training & Demonstration Programme: Conclusions

4. The Study revealed that, judged in terms of adoption of the various improved practices taught under the programme, the impact of the Farmers' Education Programme was marginal. Out of those farmers who took training under one or the other (or both) programme(s), the addition to the number of adopters of different recommended practices varied from 7.5% to 24.5%. This might be attributed to one or more

of the following reasons:

(i) **Improper selection of trainees:** Depending on the particular recommended practice, between 35% to 55% of the trainee farmers were adopters even prior to training, and to that extent were precluded from adding to the net impact. Secondly, a few of the items of training were not relevant to some of the trainees such as on irrigation practices for farmers having inadequate or no irrigation facilities.

(ii) **Improper selection of areas:** The rationale behind selecting intensive agricultural districts, as being areas of identified potentialities, was not followed through to the lower levels in selecting areas/pockets of high potential within the district. As a result, an ideally endowed plot was found and selected for laying demonstrations, which was, however, <sup>a</sup> typical and hence not relevant to generally prevalent conditions in the locality. Apart from the agricultural potential of the area, the need for training or otherwise was not always considered; demonstrations were held in areas where the only hinderance to extension of recommended practices, like multiple cropping and fertiliser application was the lack of facilities (irrigation credit, inputs) and not a lack of knowhow or motivation.

(iii) **Bias in selection of demonstration plot holders:** There was a bias in favour of bigger farmers in selecting them for laying demonstration plots, which defeated the main purpose of demonstrating the applicability of the recommended practices by cultivators, irrespective of the size and affluence of the farmer.

5. Quality of training The following main shortcomings were observed during the field study:

- (a) According to the trainee farmers, the training was much too theoretical in nature and not adequately supported by practical demonstrations and audio-visual aids; the language was also often reported to be too technical.
- (b) The lack of full complement of staff and/or adequately qualified, experienced and trained staff under both the programmes (particularly female instructors in the F.T. Programme) had a beneficial effect on the quality of training; this was compounded by the problem of frequent transfers in some cases.
- (c) The occasion of a contact between trainers and trainees was not fully exploited for giving comprehensive training in all the recommended practices - particularly during the National Demonstration field-day training.
- (d) The lack of coordination amongst staff of the two Programmes in a number of districts was also responsible for a neglect of farmers' training aspect of the N.D. Programme.
- (e) Pre-occupation with the achievement of merely quantitative targets, in terms of training camps, trainees, demonstrations, etc. and under the N.D. Programme of achieving set yield targets at the demonstration plots, was sometimes at the cost of the quality of training. Intensive use of the National Demonstrations as a medium of training was generally not made.

6. Lack of follow-up Neither as an integral part of the F.E. Programme nor in the course of the normal working of agricultural extension agencies was there any worthwhile follow-up measure taken after the training programme. Hence trained farmers were unable to adopt such recommended practices as soil testing for want of guidance and facilities.



7. Lack of supervision and guidance. Implementation of both the F.T. Programme and the R.D. Programme were generally left to the field staff (of the F.T. centres and the ~~SMS~~ teams) without much supervision and guidance from above. Neither the coordination committees set up for the purpose nor the higher level officers responsible for the programmes were closely involved at the operational level.

(B) Discussion Groups

8. The Discussion Groups were established to provide a two-way communication channel between the farming community and specialists on one hand and Radio and Discussion Groups on the other, through planned farm broadcast answers to farmers' questions. These Discussion Groups were provided with transistor radio sets at subsidised rates. Despite large numbers of Discussion Groups, mostly male, being established, it was found that in most of the districts, -this part of the F.E. Programme was, by and large, a failure; the majority being either either dormant, defunct or only existent on paper. The main reasons observed were as below:

(a) Mostly persons without any serious ~~intent~~ had organised Discussion Groups with the sole objective to -acquire the transistorised radio set at a subsidised rate under the scheme.

(b) F.T. centres had organised Discussion Groups to achieve targets, without first being able to ensure the necessary enthusiasm and interest amongst the members and convenors to sustain their functioning.

(c) F.T. Centre staff had not taken an active part in the functioning of the Discussion Groups, so as to supervise, guide and activate them, owing to the large numbers established and the other preoccupations of the staff.

(d) There was lack of coordination between establishment of Discussion Groups and training of convenors by the F.T. Centres.

III. Suggested  
Lines of  
Action

9. The above assessment suggests that action to improve the operation of the Farmers' Education Programme may be taken on the following lines:

(i) The ever-~~existing~~ need is for a more conscious awareness, at all levels of the implementing agencies, that the National Demonstration Programme and Farmers' Training Programme, as parts of the F.E. Programme, are integral to the overall agricultural production programme, and that the mere achievement of physical targets in terms of numbers of training camps/courses, trainees, demonstrations, and yield targets, is not an end in itself. Since the basic objective of the F.T. Programme is to raise the level of agricultural production in the area of its operation, it would be prudent to concentrate on those areas pockets or ~~within~~ the district which had been identified to be having the maximum potential for development. This is -likely to yield better returns than widespread efforts.

(ii) The supervisory level officials of the implementing agencies (State Government departments and agricultural institutes) should be more closely and directly involved in the implementation of the programme. The responsibility for implementation need not be left, in the main, to the

field level staff. This would imply not only having sufficiently senior and experienced officials at this level but, more importantly, ensuring that these officials devote the necessary time to undertake frequent tours for first-hand supervision of the field staff.

(iii) Concomitantly, the field staff must be ensured both in the requisite numbers and of the requisite quality in terms of aptitude, experience and training. A reasonable tenure at a posting must also be ensured to give the staff the chance to familiarise themselves with the area and its needs and to cater specifically to them.

(iv) There should be effective coordination between the staff of the H.F. Programme and the F.T. Programme. Keeping in view the complementarity of the two, it might be better to place both the teams under a common controlling authority in the field (district).

(v) There is greater need for coordination between the F.E. Programme and the usual agricultural extension agencies of the district (such as the District Agricultural Officer and Development Blocks), so that systematic and concerted follow-up action is taken after the training programmes to ensure actual adoption by cultivators. It must be impressed upon the agricultural extension staff that the training and demonstration programmes are supplementary to their efforts towards a common goal. Follow-up action by the extension staff will not involve any additional work, but merely channelising their efforts in a more purposeful way by concentrating them on the trained farmers who can be expected to be more responsive.

(x)

(vi) As stated earlier, within the selected districts, selection of areas for laying demonstrations has to be more purposive, so that areas/pockets having the potential for adoption of recommended practices are deliberately covered. As a corollary, it follows that the recommended practices must be tailored to suit the conditions generally prevalent in the area. This is particularly true for recommending crop rotations, as these must satisfy local consumer and market preferences.

(vii) The implementing agencies have to be equally discriminating in ensuring that the syllabus of the training course and the trainee farmers are properly matched. An F.T. Centre will have to devise different syllabi to meet the varying needs of the different types of cultivators it caters to.

(viii) Apart from ensuring suitable staff and the appropriate syllabi, the method of training must rely more on practical demonstrations and use of audio-visual teaching aids. Since the educational level of the trainee farmers can not be changed in the short-run, the training methods will have to be adopted to suit the existing conditions.

(ix) Coordination Committees at the State and district levels will have to be activated. Where both the N.D. and F.T. Programmes are in operation, it would be better to constitute a single coordination committee for both.

The Committees should be responsible for coordinating not only the working of the two programmes, but between these

two and the agricultural extension agencies of the State as well. Whereas a high level Coordination Committee would have the necessary authority to enforce compliance with the decision and directives, it would be by its very nature not be in a position to meet frequently to consider incidental problems of implementation. It would, therefore, be better to have a smaller and more accessible standing sub-committee of the Coordination Committee to decide on such matters, particularly on technical aspects, viz. selection of demonstration sites, approval of recommended crop rotations, details of -training programmes, etc.

(x) Since most of the Discussion Groups could not play fully the role expected of them, it might be worthwhile to discontinue their establishment as officially sponsored and subsidised organisations. Instead, they may be encouraged to function as purely voluntary bodies (duly recognised by Government) to which the F.T. Centres and All India Radio should continue to provide technical support, as at present. The conditions under which such Discussion Groups should be given official recognition, and function, are suggested below:

- (a) Only Discussion Groups with trained convenors should be recognised.
- (b) Convenors should be accepted for the convenors' training course after ascertaining their capabilities, particularly in terms of organising ability and literacy. The convenors' training should include a general course on agricultural methods like the short-term training for farmers under the F.T. Programme.

- (c) Subsidy on radio receivers as incentives to convenors should be dispensed with. Instead, a part of the prize money for the best Discussion Group might be earmarked for the convenor as an incentive.
- (d) Free farm literature and stationery should be supplied only on specific requests by Discussion Groups on a year to year basis.