

## **DETERMINATION OF ATTITUDE OF CONTACT FARMERS TOWARDS WORKING EFFICIENCY OF FIELD ASSISTANTS IN TRAINING AND VISIT PROGRAMME**

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The Training and Visit Programme (T & VP) has recently been launched all over the Punjab after considering its superiority over the conventional one in minimizing the gap between the farmer and the field staff particularly the Field Assistants. Keeping in view the important role of Field Assistants under this new system, their effectiveness needs to be determined. Thus the present study was undertaken in 20 randomly selected villages of Vehari Tehsil and 200 contact farmers were interviewed at random. The analysis of data revealed that most of the respondents were not fully satisfied with the level of knowledge of Field Assistants. It was also disclosed that the Field Assistants neither arranged sufficient meetings nor took farmers to the demonstration plots frequently. Thus, the difference between the conventional and T & VP cannot be regarded as significant.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Agriculture, being the main stay of Pakistan's economy, has always been treated preferably by every government. As a result of various steps taken from time to time by the government, overall crop production has shown an increasing trend in the country. However, the production of wheat, gram and minor crops lagged behind the planned target (Anonymous, 1988-89) and thus food requirements were met out through imports. The said situation is not encouraging for a country having agro-based economy and it demands a thorough probe into the factors responsible. Jalvi (1981) identified agricultural extension services as one of the key factors contributing to low and stagnant production in 1970-77 period. The limited number of agriculture field staff and scattered rural areas may be the main constraints in the timely dissemination of the latest reco-

mmendations. So to overcome the said problem another system of Agricultural Extension termed as 'training and visit programme' (T & VP) was initiated in five selected districts of the Punjab in 1978. On the recommendations of the evaluation cell in 1987, the said programme has been started in whole of the Punjab by replacing the old extension system. The most important and distinguishing characteristics of the said programme are pinpointed as narrowing the gap and strengthening the contacts between the farmers and extension field staff particularly the Field Assistants. In this system, one Union Council at the minimum or 100 farm families have been put under the jurisdiction of one Field Assistant, besides allocating 50 early adopters as the contact farmers to each Field Assistant for fortnightly training programme. According to Adams (1982), the contact farmer is not only encouraged to work for his own benefit but

also leads the fellow farmers in the adoption of the latest agricultural recommendations. The efficiency of the contact farmers in this respect depends upon the efficiency, regularity and effectiveness of Field Assistants who have to transfer crop production technology to them (Anonymous, 1987).

the universe for the study. Twenty villages were selected at random from Vehari Tehsil and then, 10 respondents from each selected village were randomly selected. Thus a total of 200 respondents were picked up for investigation. The data collected with the help of interview schedule were analysed to draw

**Table 1. Respondents' opinion towards holding of meetings and arranging visits to demonstration plots**

**a. Holding of meetings**

Response	Number	Percentage
Frequently	70	35.0
Occasionally	10	5.0
Whenever requested by the respondents	15	7.5
Never	105	52.5
Total	200	100.0

**b. Arranging visits to demonstration plots**

Response	Number	Percentage
Always for all operations	25	12.50
Off and on for some operations	10	5.00
Whenever requested by the respondents	16	8.00
Never	149	74.5
Total	200	100.0

In this way, the Field Assistants act as the foundation stones in the whole system of T & VP and positive attitude of the contact farmers towards them serves as an indicator for the success or failure of this programme. Thus in order to test the validity of this system, the study was designed to find out the opinion of the contact farmers about the Field Assistants.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Vehari, being one of the five initially selected districts for T & VP, was taken as

conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 indicates that meetings and visits to the demonstration plots were not given due emphasis as pointed out by 52.5 and 74.5% respondents respectively. The opinion of the majority is in consonance with those of Haq *et al.* (1986), who revealed that a majority of the farmers remained unaware of the demonstration plots established by the Field Assistants.

Table 2 shows a diversified opinion as 35% respondents declined to give any response, whereas 30, 15 and 15% considered them cooperative, helpful and impartial respectively. However, the Field Assistants were considered as unpredictable and authoritarian by 12.5 and 5.0% respondents respectively.

**Table 2. Farmers' view regarding the Field Assistants**

Response	Number	Percentage
Cooperative	60*	30.00
Helpful	30	15.00
Impartial	30	15.00
Unpredictable	25	12.50
Authoritarian	10	5.00
No response	70	35.00

\* As the respondents gave more than one response, so the number exceeds the actual one.

**Table 3. Opinion of respondents towards the information level of the Field Assistants**

Response	Number	Percentage
Latest and authentic	80*	40.00
Complete	35	17.50
Timely	35	17.50
Practicable	25	12.50
Unsatisfactory	120	60.00

\* As the respondents gave more than one response, so the number exceeds the actual one.

Table 3 reveals that a majority of 60% respondents was not satisfied with the performance of Field Assistants, whereas the rest of them were satisfied in one way or the other. The results are supported by Haq *et al.* (1986) who considered that the knowledge/capabilities of extension staff were not up to the mark.

A brief summary of the conclusions drawn indicates that majority of the contact farmers were not satisfied with the knowledge level of the Field Assistants. Moreover, the meetings and field demonstrations were not conducted satisfactorily by the Field Assistants.

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