

Block Demonstration as a Total Integrated Farming System

Block demonstration (BD) is a group method of extension which could be used in the extension education process to uplift farmers standard of living, and to alleviate the poverty of farmers through training to make right decisions and optimising benefits.

Block Demonstrations (BD) also could be viewed as a system where a group of farmers collectively and unitedly cultivate contiguous block of land adopting new improved agricultural practices and receiving all other services such as input supply, marketing, extension services and others. Also the farmers organization is supported by a collectively managed group credit scheme.

In 1982 as an alternative model to Roger's was proposed by Rolling. They emphasized that the farmers adoption rate for new innovations is related to the accessibility for resources needed by the farmers.

Land, water, capital, labour, inputs and information are some types of resources to be considered as indispensable for farmers. Those who have high accessibility to these resources will adopt new technologies. Thus they can do better cultivation and get a greater income and continue to be highly efficiently if all the resources are accessible.

The farmers who have low accessibility to resources are those who will have low access to one or more resources. Poor accessibilities to resources will reduce and limit their adoption (rate of) new technologies. Then their production capacities will be low. They will continue to be handicapped by the low accessibility to resources unless it is remedied.

The target group for the Block Demonstration should (compulsorily) be those farmers with low accessibility to resources. The Block Demonstration programme aims to increase the farmers accessibility to resources such as information, capital, labour, input, water and land etc. Our extension programme should be geared to increase farmers accessibility to the vital resources. They need for producing more.

According to B.E. Swanson any extension programme should have two dimensions for it to increase the farmers accessibility to resources.

- (1) It should increase the farmers technological efficiency.
- (2) It should increase the farmers resource allocative efficiency.

Block Demonstration is one extension method where both above functions are performed simultaneously. It increases farmers technological efficiency by educating them on new improved practices. The tools used for this purpose are :

- (1) Personal visits (by extension agents)
- (2) Group discussions (with other farmers)
- (3) Farmer training classes.
- (4) Field days.
- (5) Demonstrations.
- (6) Posters, radio programmes, television programmes.
- (7) Study Tours.



The increase of farmers resource allocative efficiency is achieved by improving their decision making to allocate their limited resources in a more meaningful manner. In the Block Demonstration programme, tools used to increase their resource allocative efficiency are :

1. Establishing a cohesive group of farmers.
2. Allowing farmers to make their own decisions.
3. Giving the responsibility for financial management (under closer supervision) to farmers.
4. Changing the management annually to allow all the members to become managers and improve their leadership abilities.
5. Regular monthly meetings.
6. Making farmers to work collectively and unitedly to obtain inputs, adopt recommended cultural practices and to dispose of their produce.

RD programmes educates farmers to improve their leadership abilities and improve their resource management abilities.

We know that integrated pest management was a innovation highly accepted by the farmers in the recent past. The Block Demonstration Programme attempt (not only for the pest control practices to be integrated) to integrate other agricultural and social practices for the upliftment of the farming society.

Some of the practices that can be integrated in a Block Demonstration are :-

- (1) Integrated plant nutrition system.
- (2) Integrated pest management practices.
- (3) Integrated water management practices.
- (4) Coordination of inputs supply and marketing of produce.
- (5) Integration of farm women extension programmes.
- (6) Integration of young farmers extension education programmes.
- (7) Coordination of other services rendered by government and non-government organizations (NGO).
- (8) Integration of homestead development programme.

Therefore Block Demonstration is one of the most appropriate places where extension can demonstrate the total package of practices. The Block Demonstration can be considered as a concept where one can demonstrate a total by integrated system.

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