CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRESSIVE FARMERS

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It is now a well known fact that there is a great deal of variation among farmers in their responses to the same extension programme operated by the same worker. This study was conducted to delineate the personal, economic, psychological and sociological characteristics which distinguish the progressive farmer from his non-progressive counterpart.

Method of study

The venue of the study was Bhagalpur district in South Bihar. Three types of respondents—progressive farmers, their neighbours and Village Level Workers—constituted the sample. From the list of progressive farmers sent for training at Bihar Agri. College, Sabour, 20 per cent were selected for this study. The V.L.Ws. and neighbours were selected from the respective areas of the progressive farmers by random sample technique.

Findings

The findings were analysed under four heads : Under personal characteristics it was found that progressive farmers fall in the age group 31-40 with a median age of 37 years. Majority of these farmers had education up to middle school and some up to high school standard. The majority of progressive farmers belonged to middle caste group. Besides they have had training in improved agricultural practices and had farming experience ranging from 1 to 10 years.

As for the economic characteristics, most progressive farmers were found to have landholdings between 5 to 10 acres and some more than 10 acres. Only 12 per cent had tractors of their own or hire tractors for their farming. Six per cent of the progressive farmers had their land on rent and about 18 per cent were share-croppers. The participation of the women and other members of the family in farming operations was found to be high. As for their cropping patterns, most of them were found to grow wheat, paddy, maize and barley. In addition they grew one or more pulse crops. Sugarcane, chillies and vegetables were the cash crops grown by 56 per cent of progressive farmers. Jowar was grown as fodder. Dairying and gur making were other supplementary enterprises.

The Psycho-Sociological characteristics. The families of the progressive farmers tended to be nuclear. They seemed to have a non-cooperative attitude towards small cultivators. The majority of the progressive farmers had high prestige in their community and only 6 per cent had low prestige. Progressive farmers were generally found to be active in social, developmental and national organisations; many of them were active in politics as well. Not only did this category of farmers supply useful information to neighbours, but they were also seen to supply improved seeds, fertilizers, bullocks and so on. An average of 40 per cent of the neighbours learnt one or more new techniques from them.

Recommendations :

Based on these findings, certain recommendations have been made, the most salient among which are :—

1. Greater care should be given to the organisation of training programmes of farmers. The duration of the training should be increased from one to two or three weeks before a crop season with enough emphasis on practical work.
2. Crop competition programme should be organised.
3. Progressive farmers who lack funds should be given some financial help.
4. Improved seeds, fertilizers etc. should be distributed through progressive farmers.

*Alam Md. O. ; Characteristics of Progressive Farmers; Unpublished M. Sc. Thesis, Bihar Agricultural College Sabour, 1964.

ROLE, WORK LOAD AND TRAINING NEEDS OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION OFFICERS

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Objectives and Method

The main objectives of the study were (1) to investigate the role, workload, and their training needs, and (2) to make recommendations based on a study of their problems.

The venue of the study was the Mahakaushal region of Madhya Pradesh State. The data were collected from 50 Agri. Extension officers (A.E.Os), by mailed questionnaire.

Findings

1. 74 per cent of the A.E.Os. came from rural areas and 50 per cent of them were sons of farmers. They belonged mostly to the age group 25-35 years, and there was no one above 40 years. 42 per cent of them were Agricultural Graduates and the rest mostly matriculates, a few of them having finished their intermediate examinations. Only one A.E.O. had M.Sc. degree in Extension and Rural Sociology. 8 per cent of the A.E.Os obtained direct appointment to this post, the rest were promoted from lower posts.

2. 20 per cent of the blocks had populations ranging from 75,000 to 90,000 while the optimum number should have been 50,000. 34 per cent of the blocks had from 200 to 300 villages each, 48 per cent had from 151 to 200 villages each and 18 per cent had between 100 and 150 each against the prescribed limit of 100 village per block. Again as against the prescribed area of 150-170 square miles for each block, only 10 per cent satisfied this requirement. 44 per cent had between 200 and 300 square miles area, 32 per cent had 300 to 400 square miles, 2 per cent had 400 to 500 square miles and 2 per cent even more than 500 square miles. By and large most of the A.E.Os. felt that their area of operations should be confined to only about 200 square miles covering about 100 villages.

These factors placed a limit on the A.E.O.'s effectiveness.

3. About 36 per cent of the A.E.Os. had not had any training in Extension and 60 per cent had no chance of attending even the refresher courses.

4. 38.46 per cent of their working time was spent on reports, 15.38 per cent on travelling, 3.8 per cent on supplying seeds and fertilizers and only 36.5 per cent on making contacts with farmers.

5. The problems mentioned by the A.E.Os. can be classified into three categories.

(a) The farmers themselves are slow or unresponsive on account of illiteracy, prejudices against innovations, superstitions, and above all their poverty.

(b) The A.E.Os. complaints : 64 per cent complained that the area of operation was too large, 84 per cent said they had too much of paper work, 76 per cent said the supplies of fertilizers and seeds were not available in time, 36 per cent had complaints about the ill planned programmes, and 52 per cent said that the programmes were unsuccessful largely because of the lack of co-operation and co-ordination among extension workers at the Block level.

(c) Many of the A.E.Os. complained about the dual administration by the B.D.Os. and the District Agricultural Officers and also about the lack of proper guidance. 42 per cent complained of lack of proper storage facilities and 36 per cent of poor communication and transport.

*Bisen J P., A. Study of Agri Extension Officers in relation to their Training Needs in M.K. Region M.P., M.Sc. Thesis University of Jabalpur 1962.

DIFFUSION OF INFORMATION AND FARMERS' RESPONSE IN RELATION TO AN IMPROVED FARM PRACTICE (HYBRID MAIZE)

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Problem

Hybrid maize is a new practice introduced among farmers. This requires change in many aspects of the old method of maize cultivation as well as change in food habit. It has been observed that though the villagers are conscious of some improved farm practices, still only a handful of literate and well-to-do persons respond favourably to the various innovations. The present study was to know the relative importance of different information sources and problems of acceptance of hybrid maize cultivation.

Findings

Higher the education of the farmer, greater is the interest in reading various kinds of literature. Agricultural magazines are least preferred by the farmers. Adopters of the new ideas have favourable attitude towards Govt. programme. But older ones are more prejudiced against Govt. programme than younger ones.

Size of holding and education are positively related to information seeking habits, but size is not effective in case of highly educated farmers. Greater the number of information sources sought, greater is the extent of adoption.

Demonstration is the most important activating source for adoption. Younger farmers are more influenced by demonstration than older ones. Seed producer is an important source of information and activates farmers to adopt hybrid maize. Majority of farmers seek information from him.

Education and size of holding are positively associated with the time of awareness of a idea. Education is positively related to time of adoption. Illiterate farmers adopt practice in the later part of the time sequ while the educated adopt earlier. But the ponse of middle standard educated farmers slightly more than farmers highly educated

Age of the farm-operator has no rela to adoption but education and size of hold are positively related to adoption of improv practices. Increase in size of farm shows increase in dissatisfaction towards hyb maize. Among various maize varieties, is preferred for all purposes except for Bisw Ganga No, 1 is mostly preferred for 'Biswa Ganga No. 101 is not preferred for any pose.

Farmers of lower economic status hybrid maize for food while big cultivators don't like its taste. Bad taste, unpleasant colour and hard grain of hybrid maize were stated to be main reasons against using hybrid maize as food. Main factors mentioned for non-adoption were less preference by labourers need for more fertilizers, difficulty in procuring seed, high price of hybrid seed and possibility of failure of the crop.

As regards attitude towards hybrid maize farmers as well as extension workers possess unfavourable attitude towards hybrid maize.

Majority of farmers have reverted to hybrid maize cultivation. Education and size of the farmers are not related to reversion. Bigger farmers tend to revert more frequently than small farmers Bad taste, less preference by labourers, need of more fertilizers and poor net-return are main reasons for reversion.

*Rai H.N., Diffusion of Information and Farmers' Response in Relation to an Improved Farm Practice (Hybrid Maize), M.Sc. Thesis, Bihar Agriculture College Sahour, 1964.

A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN DEVELOPMENT BLOCK, BICHPURI, AGRA

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Objectives

This investigation was carried out in Development Block, Bichpuri (Agra) during the year 1964 to assess the extent of adoption of improved practices in different crops, increase in crop yield and reaction of the farmers towards the block since its inception in 1956. The reasons of non-adoption of improved practices and their sources of information were also studied. 64 heads of the families were selected by random sampling technique and data were collected by personal interview with schedule.

Findings

The Block concentrated its activities mainly to improve the cultivation of three crops—bajra (pearl millets) in the kharif season and wheat and gram in the rabi season. The crop wise main findings based on the cropping year 1963-64 are as follows :—

1. Except green manuring which was done for wheat to some extent, no other recommended practices were in use by the farmers in any crop in the pre-block period. It may therefore be said that the recommended practices were adopted after the start of the block activities.

2. Out of the two improved practices recommended by the Block for bajra, 10 per cent of the bajra growers adopted fertilisers alone and another 12 per cent adopted fertilisers in combination with line sowing. About 62 per cent of the growers who used fertilisers did so only on a part of their bajra area. Poor availability and high initial fertility of the soil were the reasons given for partial adoption of fertilizers. No increase in yield, inadequate supply availability of sufficient compost and lodging were the reasons given for non-adoption of fertilizers. Ignorance about the practice and no better yield were the reasons given for non-adoption of line sowing.

3. Among the various practices recommended for wheat, improved seed and fertilizers, have been adopted by 79.5 and 68.2 per cent of the wheat growers covering 84.7 and 55.8 per cent of the area under this crop respectively. The main reasons given for non-adoption of improved seed were supply of poor quality seed and their non-availability. The reasons given for non-adoption of fertilizers were poor availability, lack of irrigation and no increase in yield.

4. About 20 per cent of the wheat growers followed green manuring on a part of their wheat area in 1963-64, 77.7 per cent of whom started its use during the Block period. The main reasons given for partial or non-adoption of this practice were improper decay of green manure crop and thereby inviting whiteants, loss of one kharif crop, late rains, delay in turning in of green manure crop which delays wheat sowing and water-logging.

5. Only 39 per cent of the wheat growers used one or more of improved implements. About 47 per cent of the users did not own any improved implement. Require more bullock power, lack of money and small size of holding were the reasons given for non-adoption of improved implements.

6. Reduced seed rate and sowing by dibbling method were reported to have been adopted by 38.6 and 18.0 per cent of the wheat growers respectively. Poor soil and poor yield were the main reasons given by non-adopters of reduced seedrate. More labourand time requirement, lack of dependable source of irrigation and poor soil were the reasons for non-adoption of dibbling.

7. Only 16 per cent of the wheat growers adopted plant protection measures. The only reason mentioned by the farmers for non-adoption of plant protection measures was their ignorance about them.

8. Out of two improved practices recommended by the Block for gram, only 16.6 per cent growers of this crop adopted them either singly or in combination. The sole reason advanced for non-adoption of the recommended practices was their ignorance about them.

9. The Village Level Worker was reported as the main source of information about improved practices.

10. As regards increase in yield due to adoption of improved practices, the yield of bajra increased from 8.3 q/ha to 10.3 q/ha with the use of fertilizers and to 12.7 q/ha when fertilizers and line sowing both were used. The increase in yield of wheat was from 12.5 q/ha to 26.6 q/ha when all the improved practices were used in combination. In gram the average grain yield of 12 q/ha with local practices increased to 18.3 q/ha (52.5 per cent) with the adoption of improved seed and superphosphate.

11. The intensity of cropping increased by 18 per cent during the Block period, which mainly occurred due to an increase in irrigated area.

All of the 64 respondents were found to be aware of the existence of the Block, but only 26 (40.9 per cent) of them obtained some or the other kind of help from it.

*Rajvanshi A.P. ; A Study of the impact of Community Development Programme on the development of Agriculture in Development Block Bichpuri, M.S. Thesis B.R. College, Agra, 1965.