PREFACE

These days winds are blowing in the direction of sustainable development of agriculture. The major reason behind it is the hazardous effects on our agriculture and environment due to interference of man in various natural processes.

It was thought that sustainable agriculture may be the base of sustainable, all round development of the nation. Only the research in this direction was not sufficient. It was needed to accelerate this development using proper communication techniques. Otherwise, research remains only in the laboratories or in research journals. Similarly, communication hardware is not enough. A great deal of research in the topic to be communicated was also necessary. This thesis, therefore has done the twin job of research in sustainable agriculture and also in developing software for communication to the farmers.

The major thrusts of this research are in respect of these basic ideas which have been linked, perhaps for the first time. These thrust areas are :-

a. Sustainability of agricultural development,
b. Decentralisation and hence participation by the villagers in the new methods of agriculture, and
c. The new methods of communication using the modern techniques.

Accordingly, chapter I discusses whether the efforts of development based on only the capital intensive technology were in proper direction or not. It is also discussed in this chapter, the nature of the development oriented communication.

Various new communication technologies are described in chapter II. The hardware and software of these communication technologies are discussed in detail in this chapter.

In chapter III, present scenario in agricultural communication is highlighted. It was observed that although various media were available, Indian agriculture was at the brink of disaster. The main cause of it was the lack of proper management planning and outlook of agricultural development. It is discussed in chapter III.

Chapters IV and V give the ways of successful sustainable agriculture and research on these new practices. It was found that earthworm farming is the best possible way towards sustainability. Effects of earthworms on soil and plants - grapes, sugarcane and pomegranate were studied. Also the role of earthworms in water conservation was studied. These results are given in chapters IV and V.

How the messages of earthworm technology for sustainable development were studied and developed is explained in chapter VI. It was experienced that either the message development alone, or only communication of some technology, lacking in scientifically.
proved message in itself, was not effective in bringing about changes in the attitudes of
the farmers. Both of them are complimentary. Hence, after developing the message of
earthworm technology, it was communicated to farmers. These messages and their
feedback from the farmers have clearly shown the power of the earthworm technology,
and that of the message for communication in rural development. This thesis has
clearly shown the new way to rural empowerment, if accepted by the policy-makers.

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