Chapter Five

Retrospect and prospect
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The present study, although confined to two blocks in one district, has been systematic and careful enough in the process of selecting the study villages. Furthermore, the two crops selected under study - a food crop and a cash crop - are both front-runners not only with reference to the life of Indian farmers but with reference to the national agricultural scenario.

Even in choosing the study sample from among the untrained cultivators of the two crops in the study villages, careful matching on the basis of pre-defined criteria has been done. Therefore it is with sufficient confidence about the generalisable character of the current data, this researcher is venturing to draw some conclusions in retrospect.

However, even before some salient features of the present study can be offered in the form of conclusions, some observations may be quite in order.

The researcher, in his capacity as the Chief Training Organiser, has been responsible for offering training programmes in a variety of crops - major ones being paddy and sugarcane - to the farmers in the district for well over five years. And for him interaction with the farmers in the district on and off the campus - trained or untrained - is an everyday affair. Thus some of the background characteristics chosen for projecting tabulated data are well founded. This contention has been sufficiently substantiated by the data of the present study.
Thus this researcher, as for himself, courts very little hesitation in attempting the following ccmduatory remarks based on the present study.

One more observation is still with in the context; Although the tabulated data has been projected allthrough the report distinctly in tens of the two crops selected under study, the trends of the farmers practices in modern agriculture do not present themselves as different with respect to the crops except in one or two instances. Yet the distinction in tabulation has been maintained as there was no specific reason to merge them any way. How ever, distinction having been made between the two crops in the presentation of data, it goes on to show that there are very many common factors recognisable at the level of grass root impact of training irrespective of the crops under study.

A. Highlights of the present study:

1. A typical trained farmer getting projected in the study is a younger and a literate one having at least marginally more lands th$h the marginal farmers level; is also liable to have a minimal level of assured water for his crops. In contrast an untrained farmer is more liable to be of an older age and much less literate-, he is also likely to be struggling for meeting the irregational needs of his crops.

The above mentioned trend between the trained and untrained is much more liable to be true in the case of sugarcane cultivators

2. Not surprisingly at all trained farmers in any village are mostly men. But, refreshingly enough, the breed of trained women cultivators has started getting produced in the last few years. If the responses by the trained and untrained women in this study is any indication, the diffusion at the grass root level is likely to
much faster among the women then what our villages have witnestered in the case of men.

3. The trained farmers maintain contacts with the formol sources like the agriculture department personnel, other contact agencies and also the local fanners forum.

4. The untrained farmers continued to relay on the informed sources within the relations, friends and neighbour; they also gather information on modern agriculture practices when they go out to the neighbouring rural areas basically for other non agriculture purposes like weekly markets, social functions etc.

5. The shuttle distinction drawn in this study between a trained farmer interacting with untrained fanner and vice-versa has shown that it is untrained farmer who is more likely to approach a trained one. The trained farmer on their part seems to exercise certain restraints in approaching their untrained counterparts to transfer information on modern technology. Yet they maintain that they would do it in their village with any farmer if there was a very visible glaring gap in the methods being followed by an untrained farmers. Further they also aver that they would be glad to help and guide any one who would approach them.

6. This study has clearly shown that the impact of mass media at the grass root level is rather limited, the only medium emerging positively being the radio. Whereas, given the situation of mass illiteracy, news paper being a down-runner in this regard is quite understandable, the limited impact of television is Indeed surprising.

7. Three, technologies in the case of paddy as well as sugarcane le seed rate, basal fertilizer application and top dressing seem to have bottom well
established among the cultivation practices of our farmers—this, irrespective of the fact of training in modern methods.

8. An average paddy cultivator—trained or untrained—is very likely to be following in addition to the above spacing and plant production to some extent with lesser or greater perfection.

9. The trained farmers in substantial numbers follow the technology in line with the training inputs yet there are a good number of those who either underdo or overdo compare to what was prescribed. Where as underdoing is a situation resulting from grass root level limitation of the farmer, the only valid reason for overdoing is that of zeal to produce more and more.

10. The analysis of time elapse between knowledge and practice shows that in the case of trained farmers with small land holdings (in the sense of being beyond marginality) and with minimal amount of assured water for crops, die able to put into practice soon enough following the gaining of knowledge. In this sense trained small farmers with irriguous land and untrained marginal farmers with non irriguous land present a picture of contrast.

11. A farmer involved in selling the agricultural produce was analysed differently in the case of paddy and sugarcane. In the case of paddy cultivator a farmer falling in line with the established market has been as having sufficient self confidence as a cultivator. A paddy grower falling into the lab of the local traders has been seen lacking in confidence. In the case of sugarcane a cultivator registering with a sugarmill for a committed supply has been contrasted with a cane grower avoiding registration.

12. Much in line with what has been said under 11 above, the paddy grower to be taken note of with respect to the performance in MAS is a trained small
farmer with iniguous lands. The rest of the cultivators are the ones all the time lacking around for some kind of support or the other. This statement is much more true in the case of sugarcane cultivators.

B. Recommendations:

On the basis of the findings in the present study following suggestions can be made. Suggestions made are of two categories:

First are those that indicate the kind of action needed at the grass root level in order to make training more effective and in order to speed up the process of agricultural modernisation; and second, the steps that need to be undertaken so that the training programmes for cultivators can get toned up.

a: Step needed for grass root action:

1. As the present study has shown that the untrained farmers rely on informal level interactions for gaining knowledge on modern practices, efforts must be made to strengthen this process through the creation of informal support groups. Once created, such support groups can function as nodal centres for dissemination, discussion and doubt clarification on matters related to Modern Agricultural Strategies.

2. Radio has emerged as an important source of information on modern practices in agriculture. Following the advent of TV and the IV itself known better in villages for recreation than anything else, it is possible that the community radio may go into obsolescence unless the once well known Radio Listeners Forum is
3. The present study has dearly indicated that more and more untrained farmers tend to be less literate marginal cultivators with rather poor irrigational facilities at their disposal. Therefore these farmers would need a certain package of supports in order that whatever input in modernisation that is given to them will find its way into the field.

4. The trained and progressive farmers on their part would be in a position to play a significant role in the diffusion of innovative ideas and practices in agriculture but only a negligible percentage as per the present study might be ready to play such a catalytic role voluntarily. Whatever little is taking place at the grass root level in this direction must be openly strengthened by making such farmers the official links between the trainers and the untrained.

5. Mere training in agriculture modernisation would produce only theoretical modernisation by and large. Any agency that wishes to involve in a training programme for farmers in MAS must first ensure that there is a follow up arrangement as a part of the training programme. This directly suggest that any agency which cannot afford follow up personnel should desist from offering such training programmes.

6. Serious and concerted efforts are needed for taking modernisation in agriculture closer to women. Given the cultural restraints and the restrictions on
mobility that their domestic roles place on the rural women, it is important that
training is taken to them if they do not come to training. A fair formula at least for
the time being would be that every agency which conducts two programmes for
men must conduct at least one for women in the village and continue the same In
the same manner.

7. The respondents in the present study by and large have given a go by to
the extension agencies, apparently meaning the agriculture department personnel.
Institutions offering course in agriculture and agencies like Krishi Vigyan Kendras
and NGO's must recognise that there is a vast scope for them to jump into the task.

B. Some eumetione for toning up farmers training programmer?:
(looking back from the grass root level)

1. The most unmistakable logic that has emerged from the point of view
of a trained Farmer in the study is that the theoretical input of agricultural
modernisation given to a farmer without any effort for net working of support
systems will be almost like giving some one the theory of swimming and clumping
the person into the swimming pool.

2. What is indicative from one above is that a trained farmer suffers not
from a paucity of schemes that could come to his support but in total lack of co-
ordinating and searching of the support systems, it is suggested that no agency
which is not in a position to initiate any effort in this direction should offer to run a
training programme in agricultural modernisation.
3. As the present study has thrown light on, more and more untrained farmers are likely to look to the better informed farmers in their neighbourhood, it is a pointer to the organisers of farmers training programme that they make it less professorial. One pragmatic way out is to involve the trained and progressive farmers who are enterprising and communication as a major part of the resource in the training programme. In fact farmers training programme must be much less like lecture classes and more like small discussion group and workshops.

4. Those agencies, as suggested under two above, that are unable to do the kind of net working of support systems, may at least pool together the benefits accruable to the prospective trainees and offer a package of incentives at a nominal registration fee as a part of the training.

5. Recognising the fact of cultural restraints and domestic responsibility in the case of rural women, training programmes for them should have more women in the organisational structure and also second line provisions like creche and day care arrangements for the children that are very likely to accompany them.

6. To the extent to which the contractors and the labourers under them are involved in agricultural operations, the trained farmers who use their service will only be pushed into witnessing certain dilution of the practice. Therefore what is needed is to bring in the contractors and landless labourers for m exposure for agriculture modernisation.
C. Suggestions for further research:

1. There is an urgent need to know why exactly the trained farmers are not able to follow all the technologies related to a crop that are imparted to them in any training programme. It would mean differently for further planning depending on whether the answers to the above questions are more on-campus or on-farm.

2. We need to know a lot more about the diffusion of agricultural modernisation among rural women because it is very likely that the phase of diffusion is different among them (faster?) compared to their male counterparts.

3. In-depth studies among the educated rural youth involved in agriculture will go a long way in designing farm support programmes adequately.

4. All farmers' training programmes must be so designed that research becomes an automatic component of the programme itself. This will pave the way for training and research becoming interactive dimensions in agricultural modernisation.

5. It is very obvious that in order to bring about agricultural modernisation, training in technology in itself cannot be the answer. The absence of co-ordination among various agencies involved at the grass root level should not escape anyone's notice. There is, therefore, a very pragmatic need to know as to what can bring about and sustain the badly needed co-ordination among the agendas involved at the grass root level irrespective of their relevance to agricultural modernisation per se.