Chapter One

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The importance of rural development in the larger frame work of national development in India needs no special emphasis. It goes without saying, in Gandhian words: "a country prospers as its villages develop". The planners in India, right from the first five year plan, have no doubt realised the importance of developing the villages. However, rural development in India has always been construed almost synonymous with agricultural development and through the latter, it was assumed, the villages would develop. Given the size of the population and the trends of population growth the demand for a much higher agricultural productivity was both obvious and reasonable. To answer this, Indian planning jumped into the task of modernising the agricultural practices of Indian farmers.

In line with the increasing demand for modernisation of Indian agriculture, a number of agencies jumped in to respond in the form of training programmes for farmers in Modern Agricultural strategies*. The variety of agencies include besides, the governmental departments, the voluntary agencies and educational institutions dealing with agriculture. But the training at best can complete the need for theoretical input, how the training input gets translated into action calls for a deeper understanding of the grass root level processes.

* See Methodology section J for definition
In the background of the foregoing paragraphs the present study was set about with a view to a dear understanding of the various forces operating at the grass root level with respect to the Modern Agricultural Strategies being followed by the farming families. Because a larger variety of training programmes are held on institutional campus and only in more recent times there is an emphasis on taking the training to the villages. Furthermore most farmers who attend the training programmes, espedally the on-campus training, are men. This is really paradigmatic because more and more women happen to be involved in agricultural occupation almost as a rule.

There is another very relevant dimension to the study of agricultural modernisation. Mere training of farmers in modern methods is not enough, however updated is the technology, however valuable the input and however good is the presentation.

If the impact of training at the grass root level were not to take its own course, there is certainly the need for follow up. The trained farmers would need guidance at the implementation level at a minimum although the large majority may indeed need much more than that.

The data obtained from the samples of trained as well as untrained farmers from four study villages (two for - each crop) have been analysed to project as to how various factors have been contributing to agriculture modernisation among the trained and untrained.