

How best to translate the results of Research into General Farming Practices *

By

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Introduction : The Department of Agriculture in this Province, was reorganised and constituted as a separate entity in 1905, about 44 years ago. During the early stages extending over a period of about 15 years, the activities of the department were mostly confined to planning and organizing (a) Research Sections at Coimbatore (b) Research-cum-Demonstration Farms in different parts of the country selected on a regional and cropbasis and (c) training the required personnel. This step can be justified because the Department can be of no help to the cultivator unless research is conducted and some tangible results are achieved for passing them on to the cultivators.

The Department expected that the agricultural practices adopted on the Research-cum-Demonstration Farms would be copied by the cultivators who visited them. This was no doubt achieved but only to a limited extent. The officers in charge of these farms, toured in the neighbourhood to study the local agricultural practices and gather material to form the basis for research work. In the course of their tours, they influenced the rich land-lords to take up certain improvements and therefore, they should be considered as pioneers in the spread of the results of research.

From the early twenties to the early forties, over a period of twenty years, though some sort of extension work was undertaken, the strength of staff employed was very inadequate, with the result that the jurisdiction was very wide. Consequently the nature of work done was not intensive, and even the existence of the Department was not widely known. It was only in 1941, that an agriculture demonstrator was appointed for each taluk and a separate officer for each district. The step taken to bridge the gulf between research and propaganda, though belated, is not even a decade old. This fact has to be borne in mind in evaluating the work done by the Agricultural Department.

Methods Employed : The expectation of the Department that ryots after visiting the Research-cum-Demonstration farms would naturally copy the practices adopted, proved to be rather slow in influencing the cultivators. The main objection was the ingrained suspicion of the cultivator that the methods adopted to secure superior yields were not applicable to his means and conditions.

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The Department had therefore to think of some other method of influencing the cultivator. In the early twenties after the appointment of a special staff for extension work, the "demonstration farm" method was replaced by "demonstration plot" method. In accordance with the revised policy, the improvements were demonstrated on the cultivator's own land and he did all the operations under the Departmental control or direction. This change was found to be very effective. This type of ocular demonstration appealed to the cultivators very much. The improvements demonstrated were taken up eagerly and their natural spread was very wide. Even today this ocular demonstration method holds the pride of place among the various methods adopted for transmission of the results of research.

The other methods followed with varying amount of success are - staging dramas, composing ballads, issuing leaflets in non-technical language, exhibiting word and pictorial type of posters, displaying exhibits in places where the public gather in large numbers (e.g., Taluk Office, Sub-Registrar's Office, Munsiff's Court) staging exhibitions in connection with local fairs and festivals, delivering lectures, imparting education to sons of farmers by running special schools and also special classes, making use of lantern slides, issuing journals in regional languages, arranging talks through the Radio and contributing articles to the press. Each of these methods has contributed to the spread of the results of research, but I feel none of these can be compared with the part played by the ocular demonstration plot. To those cultivators who willingly co-operated with the Department and enthusiastically acted as non-official propagandists in influencing other cultivators, our departmental thanks are due.

Programme: The statement "Flag followed trade" which history has proved as correct in the case of some nations is familiar to us. On the same analogy, it can be stated "Improved methods followed improved seed" in the case of agricultural development of our Province. Even today the easiest method of winning the confidence of the conservative calculative cultivator seems to be the introduction of improved seed, as the first step of approach and this will have to be continued.

Since 1937, we have had three distinguished foreign experts visiting India, at the invitation of the Central Government to study the present organisation of Agricultural Departments in India and suggest improvements. I refer to Sir. John Russel, Dr. Norman Dodd and Lord Boyd Orr. One common suggestion made by them refers to expansion of the extension side of the Departmental activity. They laid considerable emphasis on this suggestion.

Considering the jurisdiction of a taluk which on an average contains anything over 150 villages, scattered over 400 sq. miles even the present staff of one Demonstrator assisted by 2 or 3 fieldmen supervising and guiding the work of 3 or 4 maistries cannot be considered adequate. If the propaganda has to be effective, the cultivator has to be met constantly and guided in his day to day practices. This could be possible only if the jurisdiction of the staff is small. I feel, therefore, there is a strong case for increasing the existing staff employed on extension work. In a country like ours, where illiteracy is widespread, I feel the potential weapon for influencing the cultivator lies not through the spoken word or printed matter but through practical, ocular demonstration plot and visual education with the aid of cinema. Propaganda through cinema, has to be developed. There can, however, be no finality in the methods to be employed but past experience has confirmed that all other forms can only supplement but not supplant the ocular demonstration and visual education.



Utilization of Fruits and Vegetables *

By

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Modern researches have shown that fruits and vegetables are essential foods and contain highly protective factors such as vitamins and minerals which are indispensable for a proper diet. They are, however, seasonal and are not, therefore, available in plenty, throughout the year. During short periods of glut they are available in plenty, but at other times, they are scarce and beyond the reach of the average consumer. During these glut periods large quantities of these valuable foodstuffs often go to waste for lack of proper storage and transport and also preservation facilities. This is almost a criminal waste of Nature's bounty and a very important source of food. All the world over the importance of the fruit and vegetable preservation industry in the agricultural economy of the country has been fully realised. The industry is eminently suited for small scale or large scale working. In several of the advanced countries of the world there are many large fruit and vegetable canning factories. In addition to these, during the peak of the fruit season countless homes will be busy with the preparation of canned and bottled fruits, jams, jellies and marmalades. These little

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