

Integration of Agricultural Research, Education and Propaganda

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The subject for the conference symposium is "Integration of Agricultural Research, Education and Propaganda". Each one of the subject to be integrated is a vast one by itself under "Agriculture" and the integration of all into one will only solve the problems connected with Agriculture. Research in literal sense can be carried on but the results may not be of any practical use and such results of academical value cannot be integrated with Agricultural education and propaganda. Attempts in this line will result in failure only. Only such researches the results of which are of practical use can be integrated with the education, especially, Agricultural Education, which are to be transmitted to the cultivators through extension workers for achieving immediate results and to solve the present day food - problem.

In this paper the latter two parts of the wide subject "Integration of Agricultural Research, Education, and Propaganda" are taken up for discussion particularly with reference to the Education of Village Level Workers who are the multipurpose workers and who act as liason officers between the village people and subject matter specialists engaged in the various development departments for the extension or propaganda work. Under the new set up for extension work for improving the condition of the rural public, the Village Level Worker's play the important role in the propaganda or extension side. Hence the integration of their education and propaganda is of no less importance than the education of people of a higher calibre. Hence this aspect is taken up as the main theme of this article.

As a sort of introduction, I have to make a brief survey of this kind of education on a country wide basis. When the First Five Year Plan was drawn it was considered necessary to have a separate department under the Directorate of Extension to bring about a change in the outlook of millions of families in the countryside and to assist them in their efforts to build a new life and accordingly the Community Projects and National Extension Services came into existence. Thus a foundation for a welfare state was laid through

these services with the object of covering the entire country under N. E. S. by 1961. A pattern of social and economic life is the aim of a Welfare State and adequate food supply is the essential basis for the development of a sound healthy balanced economy. The establishment of improved Agriculture in the country has opened the way for a sound diversified economy. To man the National Extension Services experienced people with the aptitude for such work were drawn from different departments. The next problem faced was the inadequacy of men to work in these departments and to achieve the above objects. Further it was considered that various departments like Education, Public-Services, Industries, Health Development Departments etc., play a greater role in the Social and Economic fabric of the countryside and that a common man, who can guide the villagers in the activities of all the departments at the Village level, is of utmost importance. With this object in view institutions were started in 1952 on a countrywide basis to train the required number of men in these subjects and their extension methods for Village development and to work as Gramasevaks in the villagers. At present in the Madras State there are ten such centres.

The trainees at these centres are given the basic educational knowledge in the various technical subjects like Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Co-operation, Public-Health, Village Industries etc., which form the back bone of the rural life. Agriculture forms the main subject taught. These subjects are taught to them by men qualified in the various subjects with reference to the latest Researches and findings in the concerned subjects. The integration of the results of Researches with that of Education takes place at this level. Practical problems to be faced when they go out for propoganda into the field are borne in mind at the time of teaching, these subjects. Thus the method of teaching and the subjects taught at these centres are job-related with a rural back ground. How this is attained and the advantages derived by such a method are dealt with in the following paragraphs.

After gaining the requisite basic knowledge of a few subjects the trainees are taken to villages, round about the centre for halts of even a week to study the subjects learnt by them at the centre as applied to actual practice in the villages. They are given a chance to approach the farmers and to draw up their future action of the programme with reference to a particular subject in a realistic way and in group consultation with the villagers. Organised village

groups and in rare cases individuals form the media for the extension work. Agriculture and Animal Husbandry have a prominent part in such activities. The needs of the villagers, their attitudes and minds are well understood before suggesting any programme of improvement. The people are made to understand the changes brought about in our country and in the world by the scientific discoveries and their utilisation and how it is important to prepare themselves to the changed conditions in their own interest. These are done through cultural activities, Audio Visual Education etc., Thus as technicians by providing sound technical knowledge or informations at the first approach and at the proper time the trainees stimulate the thoughts and actions of the farmers. One may know what exactly a farmer has to do, but the problem is that he should first believe it and secondly he should have the enthusiasm for it. For this, lot of listening to them and finding out their real problems and solving such problems only will help. These problems are studied and learnt by the trainees by their stay in the villages and having constant touch with the villagers. The trainees observe closely the various improvements done by the regular Village Level Worker, follow the different stages of introduction and learn themselves as to how the villagers are convinced about a particular improvement. Through this they perfect what they have learnt in the class room and develop a certain amount of self confidence for doing such jobs in the villages themselves. They also note the difficulties experienced in introducing such improvements. The problems experienced by them in the introduction of any improvement are discussed by them with the regular Village Level Worker in the village and with the instructors in the concerned subject in their camps in the villages and in the class room.

Such visits to villages are made at intervals throughout the period of training so that all problems connected with the preparation of the field, sowing of seed, manuring, protection from pests, maintenance of purity, storage of seeds etc., coming up at all seasons will be faced by the trainees and they will learn the methods of solving and approaching the people with such problems.

During the period of such training in Village Extension work the trainees in addition to receipt of guidance and assistance from their instructors get the guidance of the regular Village Level Workers and the subject matter specialists working in the National Extension Service Blocks. By such a training they are guided on

proper lines before committing any serious mistakes and they gain the confidence in introducing or propagating any particular improvement when they go out as regular Village Level Workers at the completion of their training. This also provides an opportunity for the instructors to learn as to the ways of overcoming new situations that they might have come across and to modify and improve the technique of training accordingly.

With the limited experience in the field of education, both in a Rural Extension Training Centre and in the Agricultural College the author is made to feel that the integration of Agricultural Research, Education and Propaganda at the Agricultural College, Coimbatore in a similar way will produce better qualified Agricultural Graduates to work in the extension field with a lot of confidence and to face the various problems in the rural areas. This will also solve the time old complaint that the results of researches are not carried to the doors of the farmers. The problems faced during the training period and at the time of extension work will bring home to the minds of the Research workers the real problems facing the Agriculturists and the correct lines in which their researches are to be done so as to be of some practical utility to the cultivator for whom the Department exists.