

Role of Farmers Training Centre in Developing New Leaders in Coimbatore District

By

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ABSTRACT

It is found out that majority of the convenors are relatively more educated, have larger farms, more income, higher social participation, higher material possession and are highly progressive than the members. Most of the convenors as well as members are middle aged. No appreciable difference has been noticed between the self perception of the convenors and views of the members. The leadership roles performed as per the self perception of the convenors are in the order of harmonizer, chairman, educator, supervisor, executor, planner and spokesman. Regarding the expected roles of the convenors, they seem to fulfil all the roles except proper upkeep and maintenance of transistors and making the same available to the group. But for the factor age, all the remaining five independent variables *v/z.*, education, farm size, income, social participation and progressiveness do not show significant relationship with overall leadership roles.

INTRODUCTION

The Farmers Training centres (F. T. Cs.) have been established in about 100 districts throughout the country from 1966-67 onwards. At present, the FTCs are focussing their attention on Institutional training, peripatetic demonstration and formation and guidance of farmer's discussion groups (men and women). Among them the FDGs are relatively stable groups having distinctive leaders and followers. The leaders of those groups are called convenors and followers as members. Those FDGs are functioning as continuing media in disseminating the scientific know how to their members and through them to other farmers.

Parthasarathy (1971) and Ramakrishnan (1974) found out that most of the members of the radio rural forums belonged to middle aged group, less educated, agriculturists, married members of primary family group, had low income and small holdings with less than 10 years of farming experience, members in one of the village institutions and did not possess radio receiving sets of their own.

A research project has been formulated to know the functioning of FDGs and how far they have developed new leaders which was measured by the different leadership roles played by them.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Three stage random sampling was followed. Eight blocks were selected out of 36 blocks in Coimbatore district where FDGs have been formed. Four FDGs were fixed for each block by following random sampling technique. For every group one convenor (leader) and 10 members (followers) were interviewed with a structured pretested schedules. Totally, 21 men FDGs and 10 women FDGs were considered. Finally 31 convenors and 287 members were interviewed out of 32 convenors and 320 members.

First part of the schedule was on basic data about socio-economic characters of the respondents and second was

on the different leadership roles viz., spokesman harmoniser executor, planner, educator, chairman and supervisor. Both self perception of the convenors as well as the views of the members were gathered so as to cross check the real positions. The data so collected were also statistically tested.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The convenors are the new leaders emerged in the village situation in the recent years and how far they are acting as good leaders was assessed and the same is discussed below. Firstly, the socio economic aspects of convenors and members are compared to know whether they differ much (Table 1).

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of convenors and members of the farmers, discussion groups

Details	Age		Education			Farm size			Income		Social participation		Material possession		Progressiveness			
	Young	Middle	Old	Primary	Secondary	Collegiate	Small	Medium	Large	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Moderate	High
Convenors No. (n=31) per cent	8 33.92	16 50.70	7 15.38	5 57.34	23 33.57	3 9.09	9 44.06	9 29.72	13 26.22	10 47.55	9 33.57	12 18.88	3 40.21	7 42.66	21 17.13	6 29.37	3 28.32	22 42.31
Members No. (n=286) per cent	97 25.81	145 51.61	44 22.58	164 16.13	96 74.19	26 9.68	126 29.03	85 29.03	75 41.94	136 32.26	96 29.03	54 38.71	115 9.68	122 22.58	49 67.74	84 19.35	81 9.68	121 70.79
																		90 25.81
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																		109 61.29

It indicates that the majority of the convenors are relatively more educated (high school educated-74.19 per cent as against 33.57 per cent in the case of members), have larger farms (large farm holders-41.94 per cent as against only 26.22 per cent in the case of members) more income (38.71 per cent of convenors and 18.88 per cent of members with high income), higher social participation (67.74 per cent of convenors and only 17.97 per cent of members with high degree), higher material possession (70.97 per cent of convenors and 43.31 per cent of the members with higher possession) and are highly progressive (61.29 per cent of the convenors and 38.11 per cent of members highly innovative) than the members. Most of the convenors as well as members are middle aged i.e., 31-45 years. Therefore it is concluded that the convenors are having better socioeconomic status than the members.

Seven leadership roles (Hepple) have been studied and presented in Table 2. No appreciable difference has been noticed between the self-perception of the leaders and the views of the members. One third of them (35.48 per cent) are rated as superior and equal proportions are there with average and inferior degrees so far as the leadership roles are concerned. Based on the mean scores obtained on the self perception

of the convenors, the leadership roles performed are in the order of harmoniser, chairman, educator, supervisor, executor, planner and spokesman. The rank order as revealed by the members is chairman, educator, harmoniser supervisor, planner, executor and spokesman. Further the roles expected from the convenors as set forth in the draft guidelines of the Government of India was also analysed (Table 3).

Except the proper upkeep and maintenance of transistor radios and making the same available to the groups the convenors are found to perform the remaining five expected roles in a satisfactory manner in the order of arranging to secure answers and clarification from the appropriate authorities of communicating the same to the participants providing information to radio officer getting periodicals, bulletins etc, from FTC and conducting discussions and enlisting maximum participation of member for field visits, fairs and so on, arranging secondary demonstrations in their fields and proper upkeep and maintenance of transistor radio and making the same available to the members. The reasons attributed for the bad maintenance of radios were (1) poor quality of the transistor sets and (2) lack of regular supply of dry cells. Further the members prefer to hear the AIR programmes from their own receivers.

TABLE 2. Leadership roles played by convenors of the farmers discussion groups

Leadership roles	Self perception of convenors % (n=31)		Views of the members % (n=286)			Mean score and rank		
	Superior	Average	Inferior	Superior	Average	Inferior	Self perception of the convenors	Views of the members
Spokesman	25.81	35.48	38.71	22.38	35.66	41.96	1.87-VII	1.80-VII
Harmonizer	58.06	22.58	19.36	43.71	23.08	33.21	2.39-I	2.10-III
Executor	41.94	32.25	25.81	31.12	44.06	24.82	2.16-V	1.81-VI
Planner	29.04	35.48	35.48	25.52	37.41	37.07	1.94-VI	1.88-V
Educator	38.71	45.16	16.13	36.01	46.50	17.49	2.23-III	2.19-II
Chairman	51.62	32.25	16.13	42.31	35.31	22.38	2.36-II	2.20-I
Supervisor	41.94	35.48	22.58	30.07	36.72	33.22	2.20-IV	1.97-IV
Overall leadership roles-Mean value	35.48	32.26	32.26	33.02	36.96	30.02	2.16	1.99

Table 3. Roles expected from the convenors of the FDGs and their fulfilment

Roles expected		Roles performed (n=31)						Total score/rank
		Always	Some times	Never	Always	Some times	Never	
		No.	No.	No.	%	%	%	
Making the transistor radio available to the group and ensuring proper up-keep and maintenance		5	9	17	16.13	29.03	54.84	50-V
Getting periodicals, bulletins etc from FTC and conducting discussions on marketing, storage etc		10	16	5	32.26	51.61	16.13	67-III
Organising secondary demonstrations in their fields		9	17	5	29.03	54.84	16.13	66-IV
Enlisting maximum participation of the members for field visits, fairs and so on		13	10	8	41.94	32.25	25.81	67-III
Providing information to radio officer and arranging for taperecording the experience of successful members		13	13	5	41.94	41.94	16.12	70-II
Arranging to secure answers and clarifications from the appropriate authorities and communicating the same to the participants		16	12	3	51.61	38.71	9.68	75-I

Table 4. Socio-economic characteristics of convenors in relation to development of leadership (n=31)

Characteristics	Categories	Leadership roles (Percentage)			X ² value
		Superior	Average	Inferior	
Age	Young (upto 30 years)	62.50	25.00	12.50	12.7816*
	Middle (31-45)	6.25	43.75	50.00	
	Old (Above 45)	71.43	14.29	14.28	
Education	Primary	—	80.20	20.00	8.5366 NS
	Secondary	39.13	21.74	39.13	
	Collegiate	66.67	33.33	—	
Farm size	Small (upto 5 ac.)	33.33	33.33	33.34	0.0835 NS
	Medium (5.01-10 ac.)	33.34	33.33	33.33	
	Large (Above 10 ac.)	38.46	30.77	30.77	
Income	Low (Upto Rs. 5000/-)	30.00	40.00	30.00	0.6298 NS
	Medium (5001-10000)	33.33	33.34	33.33	
	High (above 10000)	41.67	25.00	33.33	
Social participation	Low (Member in one organisation)	—	33.33	66.67	3.9429 NS
	Medium (Member in more than one)	49.96	14.28	42.86	
	High (Office bearer)	38.10	38.10	23.80	
Progressiveness	Low (non-adopter)	12.50	37.50	50.00	3.7966 NS
	Moderate (adopter of a few)	25.00	50.00	25.00	
	High (adopter of all)	47.37	26.32	26.32	

* Significant at 5% level, N. S. Non-significant

The relationship between the socio economic characters of the convenors and their overall leadership roles were found out and furnished in Table 4.

The chi-square tests revealed that except age all the remaining five inde-

pendent variables viz., education, farm size, income, social participation and progressiveness do not show significant association with overall leadership roles. Young as well as old people play the leadership roles more effectively than middle aged group. This might be due

to the pre-occupation of the middle aged people with personal problems.

From this study it is obvious that the FTC has played its role better and developed the convenors of the FDGs as fairly good leaders in the villages. The convenors in turn have also fulfilled most of the expected roles in a satisfactory manner. Proper follow up action may help to improve the situation further.

REFERENCES

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