

## An Analysis of the Training Needs of Village Level Workers

By

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### ABSTRACT

Village Level Workers perceived themselves as an agricultural expert, a professional educator and also an extension worker in villages. Most of them wanted training in the subjects related to their job competency. Majority of the VLWs wanted inservice training to be conducted once in two years for a period of one to two months between April and June either at the Agricultural College or at the Rural Extension Training Centre through lecture method or personal contacts with superiors and specialists and also through course work for a period. Education and grade of the Village Level Workers influenced significantly the general areas of competency in which they wanted in-service training.

### INTRODUCTION

The present day agriculture requires scientific knowledge, skill and ability on the part of those who are engaged at different levels of increasing agricultural production. There is a general belief that the grass root level extension workers serving in Tamil Nadu are not fully equipped for conducting agricultural extension programmes. In service training programme is, therefore, essential for these workers to keep them abreast of the latest research findings in agriculture and allied disciplines. (Singh, 1967; Leagans, 1963). The need to upgrade the technical competency of the Agricultural Extension Officer will become increasingly important as agricultural science progresses in India and

as cultivators increase their technical understanding (Nanavathy, 1961). Halim and Islam (1973) in their study on the attitude of the front line extension workers towards inservice training programme found that about 76.00 per cent of the incumbents expressed the necessity of inservice training programme in order to conduct extension work in a benifitting manner. They preferred to attend one to three months training programme. In as much as the training needs are likely to differ it will be difficult to determine and select the contents and subject matter area of the training for all extension personnel in a general way. To overcome this, people or institutions entrusted with the organization and conduct of training programmes for different categories of extension workers

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should first determine the training needs of the incumbents and then build the training programmes around those needs. In this study the training needs of the VLWs have been identified. This study has the following specific objectives in view: to determine the subject matter areas suggested by the VLWs for inclusion in the inservice training programme, to determine the duration, interval between trainings and the venue and method of such in-service training programme recommended by the VLWs and to determine the influence of some personal factors on the training needs.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in 8 randomly selected blocks in seven districts of Tamil Nadu. The districts were selected purposively and in each district one block was selected at random except in Chingleput district where two blocks were selected. All the ten village level workers working in each of these selected blocks constituted the sample for the study. A pre-tested interview schedule was used for the collection of data from the respondents. The degree of importance attached to the various subject matter areas and the degree of needs of the trainees in these subject matter areas were obtained in a four-point scale specially constructed for the study. In

using the terms such as 'no', 'some', 'much' and 'very much' in this study equal distance between two consecutive descriptive terms was assumed and scores of 0, 1, 2 and 3 were assigned respectively for each of the above terms. This was done so that the items compared could be put in rank order for comparative purpose and for analysis of data.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

(a) **Perception of the professional roles by VLWs:** With a view to find out the perception of VLWs about their roles as extension workers at grass root level, they were asked to select the best role or roles which describe them as VLWs from among a list of statements. The data obtained are presented in Table 1.

(b) **Training needs of VLWs in different subject areas:** It is apparent that the important areas in which the VLWs need training were in the order, subject matter in agriculture, organisation and administration of extension programme, programme planning and development, farmers training, evaluation and so on. The training needs in areas like understanding social system, human development and educational process were found the least (Table 2).



Table 1. Perception of the professional role by VLWs

Professional role	Total score obtained
An agricultural expert available to provide technical advice to farming community of the village	88
A professional educator developing agricultural programme to help people and help themselves	70
A professional extension worker developing educational programmes with the leaders and people	60
An extension worker to collect loan and other kinds of receipts	40
A block staff who is meant for non-agricultural activities	28
A professional agriculturist available to arrange for supplying the inputs to the farmers of the area	26
A technical staff who utilizes most of his time in accompanying the inspecting superior officers	4

Table 2. Training needs of VLWs

Areas of competency	Weighted score and Rank orders of VLWs	Weighted score and Rank order
Subject matter in agriculture	178	I
Organisation and administration of Extension Programme for blocks	148	II
Programme planning and development	139	III
Farmers training	128	IV
Evaluation	116	V
Communication process	101	VI
Educational process	99	VII
Understanding social system	82	VIII
Human development	80	IX
Local leadership	74	X



When the VLWs were asked to mention the degree of importance they would like to attach to these training areas, it was found that the subject matter in agriculture was given the maximum importance followed by organisation and administration of ex-

Table 3. Importance attached to the different training needs by VLWs

Areas of competency	Weighted scores and Rank order of VLWs	
	Weighted score	Rank order
Subject matter in agriculture	158	I
Organisation and administration of Extension Programme for blocks	138	II
Programme planning and development	133	III
Evaluation	110	IV
Farmers training	105	V
Understanding social system	103	VI
Communication process	94	VII
Educational process	91	VIII
Local leadership	88	IX
Human development	77	X

tension programme, programme planning and development, evaluation and so on. The areas like educational process, local leadership and human development were considered as less important by the VLWs (Table 3).

With a view to compare the VLWs' perception of their inservice training needs in the general areas of compe-

tency with perception of importance attached to those area, the rank order correlation was worked out and presented in Table 4. The rho value was found to be significant at 1 per cent level. Thus it could be stated that there is a congruency in opinion held by the VLWs with respect to the areas in which they express the needs for inservice training and the areas they perceived important for them to be proficient.

**Duration, methods of training, venue, period of training as expressed by VLWs:** It could be seen that the majority of the VLWs wanted the training for a period ranging from one to two months. Only about 30.00 per cent of the respondents expressed to have training for a period of more than two months (Table 5 (1)).

(ii) **Methods through which VLWs like to receive the training:** To have an understanding of the preference of the various methods through which VLWs wanted the training to be conducted information was obtained and the data presented Table 5 (2).

The methods preferred by the VLWs were found in the order of lecture, personal contact with superiors and specialists, course work for a period, panel discussion and so on. However the mean score for the



Table 4. VLWs perception of their inservice training needs in the general areas of competency compared with their perception of those areas

Areas of competency	Weighted scores and Rank orders of VLWs' inservice training needs compared with importance			
	Training needs Weighted score	Rank	Importance Weighted score	Rank
Subject matter in Agriculture	178	I	158	I
Organisation and administration of extension programme for blocks	148	II	138	II
Programme planning and development	139	III	133	III
Farmers training	128	IV	105	IV
Evaluation	116	V	110	V
Communication process	101	VI	94	VII
Educational process	99	VII	91	VIII
Understanding social system	82	VIII	103	VI
Human development	80	IX	77	X
Local leadership	74	X	88	IX

rho Value=4.18\*\*      \*\* Significant at 1%

Table 5 (1). Duration of inservice training as expressed by VLWs

Duration	Percentage of response
One month	27.84
Two months	41.77
Three months	17.72
Six months	11.39
Nine months	1.28

methods 5 to 10 was less than the average mean score for all the methods. Percentage of coefficient of variation was worked out and it was found to be only 13. This indicates that all the methods listed out were in one or other

way suitable for imparting knowledge to the trainees (Table 5 (2)).

Table 5 (2). Methods through which VLWs preferred to receive training

Methods	Mean score obtained by each method
Lecture	2.55
Personal contact with superiors and specialists	2.29
Course work for a period	2.15
Panel discussion	2.00
Farm and home visit of progressive farmers	1.94
Feeding with current literature	1.90
Deputation to old and established farms	1.83
Regional workshop on specific problems	1.77
Seminar	1.72
Participation in leaders meeting	1.66
Percentage of coefficient of variance value = 13.00	



(iii) **Venue of Training preferred by VLWs:** The VLWs were asked to indicate their preference regarding the place or places at which they would like to have their inservice training conducted. The results are presented in Table 5 (3).

Table 5 (3). Venue of training preferred by VLWs

Venue	Percentage
Agricultural College	43.03
Rural extension training centre	37.97
Research Station	12.65
Block Development Officer's Office	3.79
Village	2.53
District Agricultural Officer's office	0.00

It is found that majority of the VLWs preferred the Agricultural College as the venue for the training followed by Rural Extension Training Centre, and Research stations.

(iv) **Probable period of the year and the interval at which the VLWs preferred the training:** The preference of the time (months of the year) during which the VLWs wished to have the training conducted and the interval at which such trainings are to be conducted were obtained and presented in Table 5 (4).

It is seen that more than 2/3rd of of the VLWs preferred to have the inservice training conducted during April to June.

Table 5 (4). Probable period of the year and the interval at which the VLWs preferred the training

Month of the year	Percentage of respondents wanted training	At what intervals	Percentage of respondents
January	3.79	1. Every year	22.80
February	2.53	2. Once in two years	53.16
March	8.86	3. Once in three years	8.86
April	31.69	4. Once in four years	3.79
May	20.25	5. Once in five years	11.27
June	15.17		
July	2.53		
August	0.00		
September	2.53		
October	5.06		
November	2.53		
December	5.06		



The periodicity at which the VLWs wished to have the inservice training was obtained and it is found that more than 50.00 per cent wanted the training once in two years. Only less than  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the respondents wished to have the training once in a year.

**Influence of selected personal factors of training needs:** Influence of the personal factors like education, status and grade of the VLWs on the training needs in different general areas of competency was obtained and presented in Table 6.

It is seen that a highly significant correlation existed between education of the VLWs and six general areas of training, viz., local leadership, communication process, subject matter in agriculture, programme planning, farmers training and evaluation. This shows that higher the level of education of the VLWs more is the need in getting trained in all areas of job competency.

As regards the status (Emergency Appointment, Probationer, Approved Probationer, Confirmed) of the VLWs,

Table 6. Influence of selected personal factors on training needs

Selective	General areas of competency					
	Local leader-ship	Communi-cation process	Subject matter in agriculture	Programme planning	Farmers training	Evaluation
1. Education	0.48383**	0.50263**	0.44434**	0.45047**	0.48898**	0.41364**
2. Status	0.11061	0.07902	0.18592	0.14181	0.09746	0.32617*
3. Grade	0.21435	0.26966*	0.25073*	0.23494*	0.25371*	0.234906

\*\* Significant at 1% level

\* Significant at 5% level

it is noted that a significant correlation existed between status and only one general area of competency viz., evaluation.

There is a significant association between the grade (1st grade and II grade) of the VLWs and five general areas of competency viz., communi-



cation process, subject matter in agriculture, programme planning, farmers training and evaluation. This indicates that the VLWs when promoted to grade I desire to equip themselves better in almost all areas of competency so that they can keep up their position both in department as well as well as among the people.

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