APPROACH TO TRAINING EXTENSION PERSONNEL.

One of the important mandate of the KVK is to organize training programmes for in-service grass root level extension personnel. In this section therefore, approach to training of extension personnel has been dealt briefly.

There are mainly three models of training. These are: i) discrete phases or traditional model, ii) interdependent and interrelated process model; and iii) system model.

The Discrete Phases Model is most frequently used training model consists of five discrete phases connected sequentially; assessment, objective setting, design, implementation and evaluation. Each phase stands independently of the other phases. It has several consequences; i) needs assessment data are **prematurely organized** and stated as training needs which results in; ii) objectives stated in very **general and unmeasurable terms** and **not closely related** to the real training needs which leads to; iii) programmes designed and implemented which are only slightly **related to the real training needs** or "real life" circumstances faced by trainees. In general, this model of training leads to **increasingly more general and less precise training efforts.**

The Interdependent and Interrelated Process Model is used in which the five phases form sub processes which are highly interrelated and interdependent on all other subprocesses as well as on the total process.

The Systems Model is a problem-solving process that places the diagnosis of needs before the presentation of methods required to achieve the needs. It is a discipline that requires those responsible for designing and providing the training that people need to carry out a series of interdependent steps in a logical sequence. The details of this model follow as it is suited to KVK in-service training. The System Model consists of a number of sub-systems which are interdependent.

The System model is a diagnostic approach. It diagnoses the performance problem. It prescribes remedy only after a careful diagnosis of the problem. It develops the training systems in five distinct and sequential phases of development. For developing a training system model, each phase is described here briefly.

Phase 1: Training Needs Assessment

This phase starts by first posing the basic question: What is the performance problem? If the answer is the gap between the desirable and the actual job performance by extension personnel, it asks the next question; what is this gap which is required to be overcome by training? In other word, what are the training needs of extension personnel? The training needs are assessed as objectively as possible, drawing a clear distinction between 'actual' and 'imagined' needs of extension personnel.

Training needs should be assessed at three levels namely,
- Individual
- Groups
- Organizational.

A number of methods for training needs assessment are available for different levels. The training needs have to be assessed within the ambit of national priorities and programmes and farmers' felt needs for training. It is essential to realize that farmers' felt needs for training lay the foundation upon which the training needs of extension personnel are required to be assessed.

Phase II: Training Plans Development

After assessment of training needs appropriate training plans are required to be developed on the basis of assessed training needs of extension personnel. A training plans can be (a) short-term, (b) long term, or both. While an Annual Training Plan is an essential requirement of sound training arrangement it is desirable that training plans are develop in, say, a five year framework. The advantage of developing training plans in a 5 year framework is that management will have a reduced task of undertaking an annual review only, enabling it to devote more time to other aspects of training management, which will enhance the value of training.

Phase III: Design of Training Programmes:

In the third phase, appropriate training programmes are required to be designed after training needs assessment (Phase I) and in accordance with the developed training plans (Phase II). The starting point in the design of the training programme is a statement of its objectives. The objectives should be stated clearly and in simple, straight-forward language. The use of jargon should be avoided. The objectives, not more than 3 or 5 in number, should clearly state the **Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes** the trainee will acquired after the training and how will it be **useful** to the trainee in his job performance. The statement of objectives should enable the trainee to have a clear idea about the relevance of training programme to his training needs.

The next step is the determination of an appropriate mix of various skills required by extension personnel. Broadly, extension personnel require three types of skills, namely, i) technical, ii) human and iii) conceptual. The mix of these skills will be different for different levels of extension personnel. Weights can be attached to different skills for determination of mix. For example, the mix for Village Extension Workers can be upto 50 percent technical skills, 40 percent human skills and 10 per cent conceptual skills.

Appropriate curriculum then can be developed by following the Concentric Circles Approach to Curriculum. Under this approach there are three concentric circles, the inner circle (Priority 1) of what must be known, the middle circle (Priority 2) of what should be known, and the outer circle (Priority3) of what could be known. It is imperative that the curriculum concentrates upon the inner circle of what must be known and does not drift to the outer circle of what could be known, as it very often happens in practice.

The selection of an appropriate training methods is the next step in the design of a training programme. An array training methods are available suited to different levels of extension personnel. As a general rule, a mix of training methods is preferable to only one training method, and the entire programme must have a problem-solving practical orientation. Practical assignments and providing adequate opportunities to trainees for interaction will enhance the utility of and receptivity of training.

Training technology now offers a number of training aids which can increase and reinforce learning. These include a number of visual aids (like chalkboard, flip chart, plastic writing board, magnetic board, flannel board and overhead projector), and projected aids (like slides, film strips, slide projectors, and video tapes). In addition to audio-visual aids, computers are also emerging as a powerful training aid. Suffice it to say that a variety of training aids are required to be used in a training programme which will sustain the interest of trainees in message receptivity.

With a view to make training an enduring exercise, supporting training material is also required to be developed simultaneously with a training programme or separately as a training input. In the former category fall lecture notes, supporting leaflets and bulletins, and as it usually the case, a compilation of course material. In the latter category fall specially developed training manuals and handbooks which can either be used in a training course or used separately by trainees on their own.

Phase IV: Training Programme Implementation

In the fourth phase, the training programmes are implemented. The implementation of training programmes is the responsibility of KVK, or more precisely, the Course Instructor. Many training programmes flounder due to poor implementation which usually reflects lack of/or inadequate preparation. Use of checklist and alertness to respond to an emergency (like non appearance of resource person in time) can prevent occurrence of many avoidable mishaps. A wise word of counsel is not to take anything for granted and to personally ensure that things are in order.

Phase V: Training Monitoring and Evaluation

In this last phase, training is monitored and evaluated. Training monitoring is relatively greater practical importance than training evaluation. Training monitoring should take place through well developed training monitoring indices like number of training courses planned and held every month and number of trainees planned and covered. The training monitoring indices will differ from level to level. These indices should be regularly brought to the notice of top management so that it can intervene to correct a situation.

An evaluation of training by trainers and trainees followed by an annual review by the top management can considerably enhance the usefulness of training courses. Suitable changes in the training approach can be made as and when necessary, on the results of training monitoring and evaluation. Evaluation should be done by the course instructor with a questionnaire having questions/items related to the coverage of the content methodology of training, audio-visual aids quality, stay arrangement, and communication eliciting responses from the trainees at the end of the training session/course. Such responses should be analyzed for making further improvement.