

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Development has become one of the major concerns of our time, especially in the process of nation-building and rapid social-economic transformation. In India like other countries, where 80 percent of the population depend on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood, all effort at development purportedly start with agriculture and development of the rural sector. With the changing concept of rural development, the integrated approach to development encompasses all aspect of rural life including health and nutrition, education and literature, family planning and so on, with the ultimate objective of improving the quality of life of the rural poor.

It was assumed that an activist state through positive action could promote the quality of life of the unprivileged, deprived and vulnerable strata of society and act as an instrument of egalitarianism in areas like the economy, education, health and social structure. But the decade of 1990 represents the cutting back of the role of government through privatization, deregulation and decentralization. Nevertheless government still plays the vital role in the development of rural sector.

Improving agricultural productivity by way of providing necessary infrastructural and technological help to the farmers is an important responsibility of all governments, particularly in developing nations. Newer technologies for increasing production are now becoming available at a much faster rate. But the mechanism for transferring them to the illiterate and small and marginal farmers in an effective manner is lacking. In order to transfer the technologies and innovations in the field of agriculture to farm community, there is an urgent need for a communication – network including extension activities. Unfortunately, little effort has been made so far for improving extension services. It is not only the knowledge that is needed, but there is a requirement of a definite approach to supply the right knowledge and tools to the right people and at the right time.

At the same time, an integrated approach to rural development encompasses inter alia the improvement of rural health services which also requires the application of extension mechanisms and the active involvement of rural health workers as extension agents.

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