

CHAPTER 5 THE ROLE OF THE BLOCK SUPERVISOR

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The success of the Department of Agricultural Extension depends on its relationship with farmers. The usual point of contact between farmers and the Department is at field level, through Block Supervisors. Although farmers also come into contact with the Department through mass media, the personal contact between Block Supervisors and farmers develops effective relationships for successful extension. This means that the extension approach will largely depend on Block Supervisors.

5.1 BLOCK SUPERVISORS AND THE REVISED EXTENSION APPROACH

Chapter 1 sets out the five basic principles of the revised extension approach. Block Supervisors have special responsibilities in each of these five areas:

Decentralisation: Block Supervisors are involved in making decisions about local extension programmes in Thana Planning Workshops, and are responsible for developing and agreeing their own work programmes.

Working with Groups: Block Supervisors work in a participatory style with farmer groups of all types. They find out about existing groups, and work with these groups to meet their extension needs. This often means working in partnership with field staff from other organisations.

Responsiveness to Farmer Needs: Block Supervisors work with farmers to assess needs using techniques such as the Problem Census and Participatory Rural Appraisal. They pass information on unsolved problems to thana staff, partly through the use of the diary.

Targeting: Block Supervisors conduct extension activities with all types of farmer - large and small, male or female. They also work with special interest groups, such as local dealers, or schools and hospitals.

Using a Range of Extension Methods: Block Supervisors plan and implement many different extension methods, some with individual farmers, some with groups. They are also involved in mass media and the production of audio-visual aids.

Chapter 3 describes how the extension approach is based on partnership. Block Supervisors work in partnership with other organisations at field level. This involves field staff working with other agencies, including non-government organisations.

5.2 ESSENTIAL BS QUALITIES

The extension approach is based on close collaboration between farm families and extension staff. Close collaboration with farmers means that Block Supervisors need to be skilled at listening, learning, encouraging, sharing, facilitating and linking. Some useful tips which can help Block Supervisors develop these skills are shown below.

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING BS SKILLS

Listening: By encouraging farmers to speak and listening carefully to what farmers are saying. Asking questions and listening to the answer. Asking questions which lead from the previous question. Writing down what farmers have said.

Learning: Being willing to learn from farmers. Not thinking “DAE knows best”. Learning from colleagues at thana level during meetings and training sessions. Remembering that all the staff in a thana form a “thana team”. Being willing to learn from other partner organisations such as NGOs.

Encouraging: Building the confidence of farmers and farmers groups. Showing appreciation for efforts, congratulating achievement and helping farmers to recognise problems in a constructive way. Also encouraging farmers to find their own answers to their own problems – helping them define solutions, helping them to test them, helping them to evaluate their own success.

Sharing: Discussing ideas and sharing options openly with farmers. Finding out farmer’s own ideas and technologies. Discussing options for testing new technologies. Providing choice rather than standard solutions. Sharing ideas with farmers and colleagues. Sharing ideas with staff from other organisations. Asking other organisations if they have appropriate technologies for farmers, and providing these ideas to farmers. Sharing resources such as training materials.

Facilitating: Assisting farmers to undertake their own planning. Bringing people together in groups to provide a forum for learning and action. Enabling farmers to express their own experiences and knowledge. Stimulating awareness of issues and confidence to do something about them. Helping farmers collect and analyse information. Trusting farmer’s abilities and respecting farmer’s opinions. Taking a neutral position and managing the process of interaction between farmers.

Linking: Developing links between farmers and other sources of advice and assistance such as fisheries, livestock, and forestry departments, NGOs, banks, traders, representatives of other organisations and higher levels of DAE. Remembering that other farmers are often experts in some areas, and that some farmers have been trained as para-professionals by other organisations. Obtaining information from a variety of sources, and providing it to farmers.

5.3 BLOCK SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

DAE’s Mission Statement is described in **Chapter 1**. In working towards this, Block Supervisors have a number of specific responsibilities:

- identifying farmer problems and needs using Farmer Information Needs Assessment;
- attending the Thana Planning Workshop and assisting in developing annual extension plans on the basis of FINA results;
- with reference to extension plans, agreeing a fortnightly work programme with a supervising officer;

- arranging and conducting planned extension activities, such as demonstrations, field days, and group meetings in line with work programmes and extension plans;
- collecting information and maintaining records for the block on natural resources; population; area of different crops under cultivation; crop input requirements; prevailing market for locally grown crops; numbers and the extent of technology use;
- completing a SEMS Form 1 for each face to face extension activity conducted;
- identifying existing farmers groups, (including those working with NGOs) working with temporary groups and encouraging the formation of new groups where necessary;
- assisting farmers in obtaining information and other assistance from organisations other than DAE;
- conducting special surveys in case of natural hazards or emergencies;
- identifying technology developed by farmers, and assisting farmers to develop new technologies;
- maintaining a daily diary of activities;
- attending all thana meetings and training days.

Each of these responsibilities is explained in the following sections, showing practical ideas for Block Supervisors to use with the support and encouragement of thana staff.

Farmer Information Needs Assessment

Block Supervisors should understand what information farmers find useful, what problems they are facing, and what needs they have, in order to provide a useful service. This is Farmer Information Needs Assessment (FINA). Block Supervisors conduct FINA with all types of farmer, male and female, large and small. Specific tools include:

- conducting problems censuses;
- day to day discussion with farmers;
- conducting participatory rural appraisal;
- conducting formal surveys; and
- using secondary sources of information.

Chapter 6 provides details of FINA techniques which can be used by Block Supervisors. Problems that cannot be solved, should be passed to thana level. If thana staff cannot help, they are passed to district level. If district staff can find solutions, they are fed back to Block Supervisors for implementation and are also included in the **District Bulletin**. The Bulletin is for all the Block Supervisors in the district, and keeps them informed of:

- local extension programmes;
- new ideas and technologies to discuss with farmers;
- activities of colleagues in other Thanas and staff at district level;
- examples of outstanding work by thana staff;
- farmer problems that have been solved at district level.

The Bulletin should be provided to every Block Supervisor on the first weekly thana meeting or training day of the month. Block Supervisors can contribute to the Bulletin through their thana staff, by submitting:

- difficult problems which have been encountered during field work, and how these have been addressed;
- a farmer information need that has not been addressed;
- a technology that farmers have developed alone, or with assistance;
- work which deserves special recognition;
- success stories from the block, such as the expansion in use of a technology.

The ability of Block Supervisors to fulfil their responsibility for FINA can be checked by thana level staff during work performance assessment meetings by:

Checking and signing diaries regularly: Are problems being identified and recorded? Are solutions being provided? Are unsolved problems being reported to thana level staff?

Checking the quality of Problem Censuses: Are results sheets completed? Are problems specific? Is there an extension activity proposed for each group? Are details of problems recorded in the diary? Are participants well defined?

Checking for PRA results: Are Block Supervisors trying some of the PRA techniques? Are results recorded?

Checking secondary sources: Are Block Supervisors meeting with field staff from other organisations? Are farmer needs discussed? Are ideas shared? Are results of these discussions recorded in the diary?

Planning

Each year, during September or October, all the Block Supervisors come together with Thana staff at the Thana Planning Workshop to plan an annual extension programme. Before this meeting, Block Supervisors should have:

- completed FINA, and looked at the results;
- reviewed information about farmer problems and proposed extension activities in the diary; and
- considered some ideas for possible extension messages and extension methods that would be useful during the next year.

All extension programmes should:

- focus on activities that will be useful to farmers;
- use extension methods that work best for the type of extension message and the target group;
- minimise cost while still reaching as many farmers as possible;
- include activities for all types of farmers and target categories.

During the Thana Planning Workshop, the TAO facilitates a series of group sessions. These group sessions ensure that Block Supervisors work together as a team to:

- consider planning information (from SEMS, KAP, Technical Audit, FINA);
- generate a set of objectives and indicators for the next year;
- select activities for each objective.

The result of the Thana Planning Workshop is a draft thana plan, written up on Form A1. Block Supervisors can check this plan with farmers to ensure that it meets their needs.

The ability of Block Supervisors to fulfil their responsibility for planning can be checked by thana level staff by:

Checking participation at Thana Planning Workshops: Do all the Block Supervisors attend? Do they come with FINA results and diaries? Have they reviewed the Agricultural Extension Manual before the workshop? Do they contribute ideas during the workshop? Have they clearly thought about the kinds of activities that will be useful in the thana?

Checking participation at regular weekly meetings and training events: Do Block Supervisors raise farmer problems? Do they propose no-cost follow-up extension activities during the season? Are they recording farmer problems in the diary?

Work Programmes

Each Block Supervisor is responsible for the preparation of a Fortnightly Work Programme. Work Programmes are prepared and reviewed in collaboration with supervisory staff at thana level. Every Block Supervisor should have a nominated supervisor. In small thanas, this may be the Thana Agricultural Officer. In larger thanas, supervisory responsibilities can be divided. Work programmes are described in detail in **Chapter 2** of this manual.

Implementing Extension Events

Block Supervisors implement the majority of extension events at block level. Every fortnight, each Block Supervisor defines a work programme based on the forthcoming activities in the plan. The work programme can also include follow-up activities which are decided in response to emergency information needs, or emerging needs which arise as a result of farmer participation in an extension event.

To ensure that planned extension events are effectively implemented, Block Supervisors are responsible for arranging, with farmers:

- a suitable time, date and location to hold the event;
- an appropriate duration; and
- training materials and audio-visual aids as required for the event.

Each extension event has a specific target group who should be invited to participate, and many events work best with similar types of farmer. Guidelines for implementing specific extension events are given in **Chapters 10 and 11**.

The ability of Block Supervisors to fulfil their responsibility for implementing extension activities can be checked by thana level staff by:

Visiting a sample of demonstrations: Are they well sited and established? Is there a control plot if required? Does the host farmer understand the objective? Can the neighbouring farmer explain the demonstration?

Participating as an observer in group extension events: Does the Block Supervisor have a good rapport with the farmers? Do the farmers appear to gain understanding of new ideas from the event? Is the event well targeted? Are visual aids used? Is a SEMS Form 1 completed?

Visits can be arranged in advance, during the work programme assessment meetings.

Block Information

Block Supervisors need to be experts on the block within which they work. This includes understanding:

- local cropping patterns and local crop yields;
- local homestead activities;
- numbers of landless, marginal, small, medium and large farm households in the block;
- which Agro-Ecological Zone (AEZ) or AEZs are in the block, and what opportunities and constraints this places on agricultural development;
- local soil classification and land use;
- irrigation systems and equipment in the block;
- other natural resources in the block that are available for farmers to use;
- seed, fertiliser, pesticide and other agricultural input suppliers and where to contact them;
- credit suppliers and where to contact them;
- which NGOs and other Government Departments operate in the block and who to contact;
- what groups are operating in the block, and what extension needs they have;
- numbers and types of livestock in the block;
- the problems different categories of local farmers are facing.

Basic information about the block should be recorded in the Block Supervisors diary, including a detailed map of the block marking on the AEZs.

The ability of Block Supervisors to fulfil their responsibility for collecting and maintaining block information can be checked by thana level staff during the work programming assessment meeting by:

Checking the diary: Is the AEZ map drawn? Are farmer problems being recorded? Is the block information section completed?

Checking Group Information Forms: Is there a form for each existing group? Is it correctly completed?

Monitoring and Evaluation

Block Supervisors should work closely with farmers to see if the local extension programme is solving local problems and meeting local needs by:

- monitoring the complete range of extension methods used, including media, demonstrations, field days, farmer training, visits, traditional and folk media, group meetings and training and participatory technology development;
- checking whether the extension activities are effectively meeting the needs of the different target categories of farm families;
- checking whether farmers are becoming more interested in trying out and even adopting new technologies.

Block Supervisors are mainly responsible for completing SEMS Form 1, the primary event monitoring form. The same form is used for every face to face extension event e.g. field days, demonstrations, group meetings, and farm walks/visits. SEMS Form 1 should be finalised at the extension event, before the farmers leave.

Formal monitoring is also done using the Block Supervisor's Demonstration and Field Day Register, which records details of each demonstration and field day in the block, including demonstration objectives, inputs, farmer participation and comments of visitors and supervising DAE staff.

Informal monitoring and evaluation can also be conducted after each extension event. Block Supervisors could visit farmers who have participated in field days, formal farmer training, motivational tours or farm walks, and find out how useful the event was. For example:

- What comments do farmers have about the ideas or the extension event?
- Were the ideas discussed useful to the farmers?
- Are the farmers interested to change their practices?
- Do the farmers need help to apply what they have learnt?
- Should another event be arranged?
- What other extension activities are required?

Farmers usually make changes after a number of opportunities to examine new technologies. This means that farmers may need to participate in a sequence of extension events. For example, a formal training session, followed by a field day, followed by a farm walk / visit. Follow-up will help staff decide what other methods might assist farmers to learn enough to make decisions on testing new technologies.

The ability of Block Supervisors to fulfil their responsibility for monitoring and evaluation can be checked by thana level staff during the work programming assessment meeting by:

Checking SEMS Forms: Is there a completed SEMS Form 1 for each activity that has been implemented? Does the form record contact, understanding and testing?

Work with Groups

When working with groups, Block Supervisors follow four principles:

- work with existing groups;
- work in partnership with other agencies;
- work with temporary as well as permanent groups;
- group members should have similar interests.

Block Supervisors should identify existing groups in the block. This can be done by talking with farmers, traders, village leaders, non-government organisation staff, and staff from other government departments.

Block Supervisors should visit existing groups to find out what involvement members or the group as a whole has in agriculture. If existing groups are associated with another organisation like an NGO, BSs may need to request the TAO to arrange with the other organisation the first visit.

It should be possible to work out ways which enable Block Supervisors to help the group with their agricultural activities. These ideas can be put in the annual extension programmes, and included in Block Supervisor Work Programmes. To record information on existing groups Block Supervisors should complete the Group Information Form (see **Annex V**). To assist groups properly, Block Supervisors should:

- attend group meetings and group extension activities;
- visit groups while they carry out their activities;
- visit and talk to individual farmers and other people from the community;
- organise group extension training sessions;
- take immediate action on items discussed at group extension events such as getting information and other assistance the group needs, from the thana office or other sources;
- encourage and help group members to gain confidence to decide and do things on their own.

For temporary and new groups Block Supervisors will probably need to organise the first few meetings until the group has developed its own leadership.

When Block Supervisors are planning a group event they should think of the following:

- the reason for the event and why it is necessary;
- what information will be needed to address the problem the event is focused on;
- how the event is to be structured;
- which is the most appropriate extension method to use;
- involvement of other DAE staff, or people from other organisations;
- making a work plan: what is going to be done by who, where and when to make sure the event runs smoothly;
- what equipment and materials will be needed;
- how to invite people, or how to publicise the event.

During the event Block Supervisors should:

- encourage participants to join in discussions, avoiding one or a few members dominating and talking too much;
- ask participants to share experiences;
- facilitate decision making, without pushing for decisions;
- take personal notes in the diary and, where appropriate, help the group to keep their own records;
- summarise at the end of the event emphasising decisions and agreed actions;
- decide who should write a brief report and what to include in it. When the group members do not wish to write a report, Block Supervisors will need to do so, and should ensure that a SEMS Form 1 is completed. All reports about the group should be kept in one place, and staff could consider keeping a file for each group.

Block Supervisors have no formal position in the group. They are there to share, facilitate, encourage and listen.

DAE does not encourage the formation of new groups.

New groups are only formed when:

- a particular block or sub-block has no existing groups;
- a particular target category (such as women or small farmers) are not included in existing groups;
- local NGOs or government departments are not active in group formation and are not willing to extend group formation activities to the affected area or target group.

Block Supervisors should review existing group coverage with thana staff and decide if it is appropriate to form new groups. If it is decided that new groups are required then:

- group members should have similar backgrounds, income levels, social status, similar needs and problems, and common interests;
- temporary groups (over a month, season or year) can work well for extension;
- group formation is complicated, advice from non-government organisations and other government departments which have group formation experience can always be sought.

The ability of Block Supervisors to fulfil their responsibility for working with groups can be checked by thana level staff by:

Checking Group Information Forms: Are forms completed for existing groups? Are relationships being developed with the organisations to which groups are affiliated (at block and thana level)?

Assessing requirements for new groups: Are there any DAE target groups who are not represented in existing groups? Are there any sub-blocks with no existing groups? Are there any local organisations willing to form new groups in the affected area or with the affected target category?

Assessing Block Supervisor facilitation skills: Are Block Supervisors facilitating group extension events well? Is using group extension methods with the same group of farmers over time encouraging temporary groups?

These checks can take place at regular intervals as part of the work programming assessment meeting or through supervisory visits with the BS.

Obtaining Information

Block Supervisors are the main link between farmers and sources of information and assistance. Block Supervisors can help farmers get access to:

- DAE extension services;
- services from non-government organisations;
- services from other government departments.

Block Supervisors are responsible for finding out what farmers need, and then helping them to access services. Block Supervisors also play an advocacy role, representing farmer's problems to agencies and institutions to which farmers do not have ready access. For example, formal banks, traders and dealers. Block Supervisors can also act as a source of options. Once a need has been defined with farmers, Block Supervisors can find out about a range of options and help farmers select the most appropriate. DAE often has available technology options, but so do local non-government organisations and other government agencies. Sometimes other farmers with whom the BS has been in contact with may be able to provide advice.

The ability of Block Supervisors to fulfil their responsibility for obtaining information and assistance can be checked by thana level staff by:

Checking their networks with other organisations: Do Block Supervisors know whom to contact in the block from other organisations, government and non-government? Do they know what services each of these agencies can offer? Are there examples of these services being offered to farmers with which the Block Supervisor works?

Conducting Special Surveys

From time to time, DAE headquarters may decide that a special survey is required. Specific instructions and forms are provided, and thana staff are given guidance. One example is the national survey of minor irrigation. It is often the responsibility of the Block Supervisor to conduct field level surveys organised by Headquarters.

The ability of Block Supervisors to fulfil their responsibility for special surveys can be checked by thana level staff by:

Checking returned forms: Are the special survey forms completed in full? Have they been returned on time?

Identifying and Developing Technologies with Farmers

Farmers are active developers of technologies. Block Supervisors can support them further by:

- observing useful and effective technologies that farmers are using, which are new, and promoting these to other farmers;
- encouraging farmers to test or adapt technologies that they saw during an extension event;
- helping farmers develop better technology through farmer experiments;
- incorporating successful farmer technologies into extension programmes and day to day work with groups of farmers. For example conducting a farm walk or motivational tour to a successful farmer's field;
- raising local farmer's technologies during the Thana Planning Workshop. The Problem Census includes a section on discussing farmers recommended solutions to the problems they are facing. Any good ideas can be raised at the workshop.

The ability of Block Supervisors to fulfil their responsibility for identifying and developing technology can be checked by thana level staff by:

Checking proposals for farmer experiments: Are Block Supervisors working with farmers to conduct experiments? Are they appropriate?

Monitoring participation in the Thana Planning Workshop: Are Block Supervisors raising farmer-developed technology for inclusion in the annual extension plan?

Maintaining a Block Supervisors Diary

The diary is a tool to assist Block Supervisors to fulfil their responsibilities. It is used to record actual work completed and any comments for discussion during the work programming assessment meetings.

The first few pages of the diary contain information about the block. This information comprises space for recording basic data, such as the population, and available resources. There is also space for drawing a block location map, a block AEZ map. It is important to understand the physical geography, demography, socio-economics and other factors that make up the environment of the block. This helps Block Supervisors provide the most appropriate service to farmers living in the block.

The next pages in the diary provide some standard information on the DAE Mission Statement and the Annual Extension Planner. Block Supervisors are responsible for the following tasks on the Extension Planner:

- conducting FINA;
- participating in the Thana Planning Workshop;
- improving skills during “In Service Training”; and
- implementing and monitoring extension events.

After the information section there are pages for every day in the year. These pages serve four functions:

- to record what has been done;
- to record farmer responses to extension activities. This is indicated by farmer comments and requests that have been noted. In this way the diary entries provide a 'window' on farmer information needs. The diary is an excellent reference for Farmer Information Needs Assessment (FINA). It provides a continuous record of requests, issues and problems farmers have noted. The diary should be brought to Thana Planning Workshops and work programme assessment meetings;
- to plan what will be done in the days and weeks ahead and follow-up work. The "Actions required by Block Supervisors" are always things to be done at a future time. If up-coming activities have been entered clearly enough, simple reference to the diary should provide information to help prepare the fortnightly work programme. As the days go by it is also easy to check of activities and actions have been completed;
- the diary also acts as a reminder because it records dates, ideas and other information that should not be forgotten.

Figure 5.1 shows an example of a BS diary page.

FIGURE 5.1 :BLOCK SUPERVISOR DIARY PAGE LAYOUT

April		1998	
<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">8 Wednesday</td> </tr> </table>		8 Wednesday	April, 1404
8 Wednesday			
Field Visit:	Subject, Problem and Solution		
Mrs Salma Begum	Subject: Pest Problem in Mango Trees		
9:00 a.m.	Problem: Mrs Begum's mango tree has flowered but she is worried that mangoes will		
Her Homestead	not form. This happened last year due to hopper attack. What can be done this year?		
	Solution: Find out more information from AEO for a solution		
	Mrs Fazlul Haque and Mrs Hasina Ali also grow mango on more than 1 Ha.		
	They had a similar problem last year. Also met another female farmer Mrs Chowdhury.		
	Mrs Chowdhury has more than 1 ha.		
What does the farmer want to know:			
Mrs Chowdhury would like me to visit her homestead to discuss a problem she has with growing sunflower.			
We agreed that I should visit her next Monday at 4:30 p.m.			
Date of next visit:			
Mrs Chowdhury's homestead 13th April at 4.30 pm.			

Each page is divided into two main parts. The top part of each page is to record visits and notes about topics discussed, work programme activities, as well as appointments, meetings and other obligations. The bottom is for recording information that farmers or farmer's groups have requested, and problems that they have raised.

For the diary to be really useful, entries on each page will usually be related to previous entries and to future entries. Each activity was planned earlier on, often as a response to a follow-up action required from a previous activity that was recorded in the diary. On the day an activity is implemented, there are bound to be further actions or follow-up required. But this follow-up will occur on some day in the future, so it should be entered on the diary page for that day. In this way the diary becomes a continuous story of action and reaction. The history and the follow-up for any action will be recorded in the diary.

The ability of Block Supervisors to fulfil their responsibility for maintaining a diary can be checked by thana level staff during the work programming assessment meeting by:

Checking the diary: Is the AEZ map drawn? Are farmer problems being recorded? Is the block information section completed? Are appointments being recorded? Are activities in the diary related to the work programme and extension plan?

Comments should be recorded and signed in the diary by the supervising officer.

Attending Thana Meetings and Training

Block Supervisors attend the thana office once a week every month and at other times if there is an emergency. The second week has been set aside for formal BS training and the Thana Agriculture Officer decides which days to hold the meetings. BS should always bring the diary to every meeting. The other monthly meetings are used for reviewing activities, agreeing work programmes, administrative matters and informal training.

BLOCK SUPERVISOR MEETINGS AT THE THANA OFFICE

Review of activities and field situation, and informal training:

- presentation of work programmes for approval by the Supervisor during a work programming assessment meeting (the scheduling of these will be agreed by the supervisor and the individual BS);
- review of current field situation, including farmers' problems and extension events;
- summary of extension messages relevant to different categories of farmer;
- progress with implementing the extension programme for the current season and a review of BS diaries (during work programming assessment meetings);
- technical discussion, where staff request assistance with new subject areas;
- administrative discussion, salaries, postings, leave, allowances, diagnostic assessment meeting;
- distribution of District Bulletins.

Formal monthly training session:

- prepared lessons and skill practice with formal training plan and trainers.

Work Programming Assessments can take place at any time during the month as arranged between the supervisor and the BS.

The formal monthly training session includes the presentation of prepared lessons and skill practice. The purpose is to teach new skills, agricultural practices and analytical methods. Block Supervisors can not assist farmers if they do not know how to use extension methods properly, or do not know enough about the technology to be discussed. Block Supervisors can help thana level staff plan formal monthly training, by deciding what their learning needs are. This depends on what extension methods are being planned, with which technologies and what Block Supervisors already know and feel confident about doing.

However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the Thana Agricultural Officer to select the training topic for the monthly training session, based on the training needs of Block Supervisors.

The preferred approach for a monthly training session is to give information and instruction, then define a related assignment that the Block Supervisors will carry out on their own before the next training session. At the next session, the assignment should be reviewed and discussed before presenting new topics. In this way, each Block Supervisor is encouraged to immediately apply the new knowledge and skills they have received. It also provides them with timely feedback and guidance for any difficulties they have experienced.

This model is known as **Instruction – Assignment – Skills Application – Review**. A number of training modules following this approach have been provided by Training Wing. However, local staff are encouraged to use the same approach to develop their own training materials, to respond to the specific learning needs of their own Block Supervisors. Formal monthly training is not the only way to learn a new skill. Block Supervisors can also:

- ask an individual such as a DAE Extension Officer, an NGO officer or a farmer who is an expert with a particular technology, to teach or demonstrate it;
- find training materials at the resource centre or with input dealers, NGOs and others. Staff can study these materials alone or with guidance from thana staff. This is called “self-directed” learning and allows staff to focus on the exact information required;
- participate in an appropriate training course in their area which is conducted by another organisation such as an NGO.

The ability of Block Supervisors to fulfil their responsibility for attending meetings and training can be checked by thana level staff by:

Monitoring attendance: Is each Block Supervisor attending all the formal training and meetings? Are they bringing diaries? Do they complete their assignments given at the training sessions ?