

BLOCK SUPERVISORS HANDBOOK

A Guide to Extension Responsibilities



Department of Agricultural Extension

Forward

To support the introduction of its revised extension approach, the Department of Agricultural Extension is issuing a series of Guidebooks, and running an Extension Approach Training Programme for staff.

This Handbook is a guide to the role of the Block Supervisor in the revised extension approach.

Block Supervisors now have more responsibilities and decision making liberty than at any other time. Block Supervisors are involved in farmer information needs assessment, working with groups, and planning seasonal extension programmes. The job of Block Supervisors now focuses on working as listeners, learners, trainers and facilitators. Fulfilling these responsibilities is a major challenge.

I am convinced that these challenges will be accepted and overcome by Block Supervisors, with the advice, support and encouragement of managers at thana and district level. This means a changing role for managers; from controlling and directing, to working together as a team.

I wish staff well with the challenge of fulfilling their new roles, and hope that this is something they look forward to with interest and excitement.

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Preface

Block Supervisors are perhaps the most important members of the Department of Agricultural Extension, as they operate at the interface between the Department and its clients. Block Supervisors are also the largest human resource that the Department has. This means that the success of the revised extension approach will largely depend on Block Supervisors.

A key theme of the revised Extension Manual is the provision of a more efficient and effective service to the farmers of Bangladesh. To support the introduction of the revised extension manual, DAE is publishing a range of materials of specific subjects, as training aids for its staff.

Guides to the Problem Census, No and Low Cost Extension Methods, and Planning have already been published. Participant's guides for training courses in Extension Management and Working With Groups also provide information and direction.

This Handbook is about the role of the Block Supervisor. The aim of the Handbook is to provide Block Supervisors with a clear understanding of their role and how to successfully carry out the many tasks involved. The Handbook also aims to give their managers a clear introduction of the revised extension approach.

Block Supervisor's duties focus on encouraging farm families to identify and work cooperatively for rural change that will be of benefit to them, and channeling the Department's resources to that aim.

While performing their duties, Block Supervisors will often be working with groups of farmers. These will be a difficult transformations to make, and I wish staff well with the change in roles and way of working. I also look forward to seeing how Departmental staff at thana and district level are able to work together with Block Supervisors in making the transition.

The handbook has been produced as a learning aid for the "Role of the Block Supervisor" training module. In future years the *Block Supervisors Handbook* will be incorporated as a special section in the Block Supervisors Diary. In this way it can be appropriately revised, improved and updated from time to time and continue to be a ready reference in field activities.

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The Importance of the Block Supervisor

The success of the Department of Agricultural Extension depends largely on its relationship with farmers. The usual point of contact between farmers and the Department is at field level, with Block Supervisors. Although farmers come into contact with the Department through mass media, the personal contact between Block Supervisors and farmers play one of the most important roles in developing effective relationships for successful extension.

The Department of Agricultural Extension published its revised Agricultural Extension Manual in June 1995 which outlines five principles:

1. **Decentralization:**

Block Supervisors and farmers will be involved in making decisions about local DAE programmes. Block Supervisors will be responsible for making their own fortnightly work schedule in view of local programmes and needs.

2. **Working with Groups:**

Block Supervisors will work in a participatory style with farmers groups. Block Supervisors will first find out what groups exist in their blocks, and will work with these groups as well as forming additional groups where necessary.

3. **Responsiveness to Farmer Needs:**

Block Supervisors will work with farmers to assess needs using techniques such as the Problem Census. Block Supervisors will then help design local programmes to meet farmer needs. Block Supervisors will pass information on unsolved problems to thana level staff, partly through the use of their diary, which has separate sections for farmers problems.

4. **Targeting:**

Block Supervisors will conduct extension activities with all types of farmer - large and small, male or female.

5. **Appropriate Extension Methods:**

Block Supervisors will be involved in many different extension methods including : drama, demonstrations, meeting, training, farm walks and problem Censuses.

Block Supervisors have many responsibilities. The success of Block Supervisors in meeting their responsibilities will determine how successful the extension service is.

The role of thana and district level staff is to manage, support, advise and encourage Block Supervisors in their work with farmers.

Central Themes

The revised extension approach is based on much closer collaboration between farm families and extension agents. This means more interactive behavior than has been traditionally required. These behavioral themes are listed and described in the table below.

Central theme	Behavioral description
Listening	Encourage farmers to speak. Listen carefully to what farmers are saying. Ask questions and listen to the answer. Ask questions which led from the pervious question.
Learning	Be willing to learn from farmers. Do not think "I know best" or "DAE know best". Be willing to learn from colleagues at thana level during meetings. Remember that all the staff in a thana from a "thana team" work together as a participatory team.
Encouraging	Build the confidence of farmers and farmers groups. Show appreciation for efforts, congratulate achievement and help farmers to recognize problems in a constructive way.
Sharing	Discuss ideas and options openly with farmers. Find out farmers own ideas and technologies. Discuss options for testing new technologies. Provide choice rather than simple technological impact points. Share ideas rather than acting as the source of all agricultural knowledge. Share ideas openly with your colleagues.
Facilitating	Assist farmers to undertake their own planning and action for their own self-development. Bring people together in groups to provide a forum for learning and action. Enable farmers to express their own experiences and knowledge. Stimulate awareness of issues and confidence to do something about them. Help farmers collect and analyze information. Trust farmers abilities and respect farmers opinions. Take a neutral position and manage the process of interaction between farmers - do not concentrate on the content.
Linking	Develop links between farmers and other sources of advice and assistance - eg. fisheries, livestock, forestry departments, NGOs, banks, traders, representatives of other organizations and higher levels of DAE.

These themes may seem difficult but they are simply an open and constructive way of working with others. You should try to apply these six central themes to all of the detailed tasks of Block Supervisors described in the following pages of this handbook.

The revised published role of the Block Supervisor

The revised role of Block Supervisors, explained in the 1995 Agricultural Extension Manual, is as follows:

- *becoming familiar with their block*
- *identifying, maintaining information on, and providing extension support to existing groups within the block*
- *encouraging the formation of new groups, where appropriate*
- *assisting with the preparation of an extension programme which*
- *addresses the needs of women and of resource poor farmers within the block, in advance of each season*
- *planning a work programme, for approval by the Subject Matter Officer*
- *monitoring each season's extension programme within the block*
- *identifying innovative or adapted technology developed by farmers*
- *following up participants in DAE farmer training*
- *maintaining a daily diary*
- *passing information on farmer's problems and information needs to the Subject Matter Officer*
- *attending the monthly formal training session*
- *attending the regular training and reporting meetings each month*

Each of these published responsibilities are explained in the next few pages as practical instruction for the Block Supervisor to follow.

- *becoming familiar with their block*

You (the Block Supervisor) need to be an expert on your Block. This means knowing :

- Local cropping patterns
- 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 your block
- Local soil classification and land use
- Irrigation systems and equipment in the block that are available for farmer to use
- Who are the seed, fertilizer, pesticide and other agricultural input suppliers and where to contact them
- Who are the 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
- Numbers and types of livestock in the block
- The problems different categories of local farmers are facing

You should record basic information about the block in your diary.

You should draw a detailed map of the block marking on the AEZs.

- *identifying, maintaining information on, and providing extension support to existing groups within the block*

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

You can then visit existing groups and find out the level of involvement of members or group as a whole in agriculture.

If existing groups are associated with another organization like an NGO, you will probably need to ask your TAO to arrange with the other organization for your first visit.

It should then be possible to work out ways that you can help the group with their agricultural activities. These ideas can be put in the seasonal extension programmes.

To record information on existing groups complete the form "Format 1" which is shown on page 7.

To assist all groups (temporary, existing and new groups) properly you will need to:

- Attend group meetings and group extension activities such as field days and farm walks
- Visit groups while they carry out their activities
- Visit and talk to individual farmers and other people from the community
- Organize group extension training sessions
- Take immediate action items discussed at group extension events such as getting information and other assistance the group needs, from your thana office or other sources
- Encourage and help group members to gain confidence to decide and do things on their own

For Temporary Groups and new Groups you will probably need to organize the first few meetings until the group has developed its own leadership.

When you are planning a group event you will need to think of the following things:

- 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
- For some events you may want to arrange for other DAE staff to attend
- Make a work plan: what is going to be done by who, where and when to make sure the event runs smoothly
- Decide what equipment and material will be needed
- Decide a location, time and duration for the event and ensure all are convenient to farmers
- Decide how to invite people, or how to publicize the event
- Write down your plan for the event and mark a date in your diary

During the event you may have to:

- Encourage participants to join in discussions, but try to avoid one or a few members dominating and talking too much
- Ask participants to share experiences
- Promote decision-making, but do not push for decisions
- Take personal notes in your diary and, where appropriate, the group keeps its own records
- Summarize at the end of the event emphasizing decisions, and action items
- Decide who should write a brief report and what to include in it. When the group members do not wish to write a report, you will need to do so. You should keep a copy of all reports in your file for future reference
- Decide what and how to evaluate. This will help you to judge your own and the group's progress.

REMEMBER:

- You are there to assist and encourage the group but you are not the group's leader, and have no formal position within the groups
- Listen to farmers
- Understand what farmer's positions are
- Learn together with farmers
- Share ideas openly with farmers

- ***Identifying the information needs and problems of different categories of farmer in the block***

Providing useful information to farmers is the reason for having an extension service.

Understanding what those needs are and properly informing your Thana office is a very important part of your work.

Needs assessment is conducted with all DAE target categories - male and female, large and small farmers.

You can learn a lot about farmer's problems and information needs through day to day discussion with farmers, and by working together in extension activities.

Block Supervisors should always record farmer's problems and information needs in the diary. This helps you to:

- Remember what you have learned
- Remember what you need to pass on to your Thana office
- Notice how often the same problems are brought to your attention
- Identify what information you need to obtain from your Thana office or elsewhere

The structured methods for identifying information needs are:

- Problem Census (see Problem Census Guidebook and Video)
- Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) (see "PRA in Bangladesh")
- Formal surveys you are requested to conduct in your block from time to time

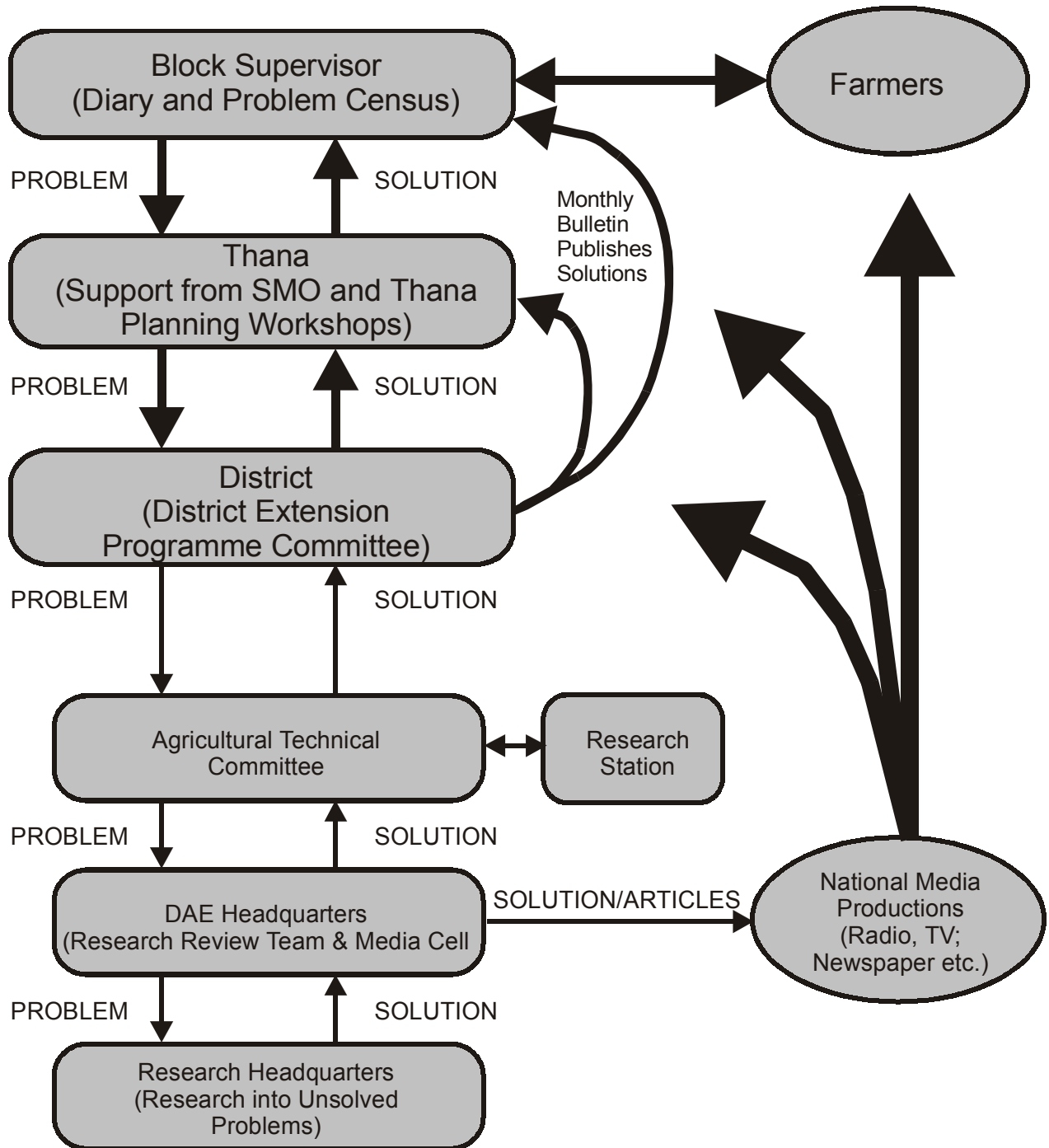
You can add to your understanding of farmer's problems and information needs informally, through regular discussion with other organizations and individuals such as:

- NGO and other group leaders
- Other members of the community such as dealers, clergy, health workers, family planners and others.

Remember that these are secondary sources of information, and like yourself, they may not have completely understood the farmers situation. You should always confirm information you get from secondary sources, with real farmers.

Figure 2, the flow of information in DAE, shows how DAE deals with farmers problems, and how the diary and Problem Census fit into the DAE system.

Figure 2: Flow of Information in DAE



Notes:

1. The diagram highlights information flows below district level
2. Problems must be solved as close to farmers as possible

- ***encouraging the formation of new groups, where appropriate***

DAE does not encourage the formation of new groups. New groups are only to be formed when:

- A particular block or sub-block has no existing groups
- A particular target category (such as women or small farmers) is 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

You should review existing group coverage, shown on Format 1 (Figure 1), with your SMO and TAO. Together you decide if it is appropriate to form new groups.

If you need to form new groups, remember these basic principles for working with groups:

- Groups members should be from the same target category so they have :
 - group members should have similar backgrounds
 - group members should have similar income levels
 - group members should have similar social status

They will then have similar needs and problems, and common interests.

- Consider forming temporary as well as permanent groups
- There will likely be lots of problems in managing group development where you will need guidance. You should discuss your difficulties with others who are experienced in forming and encouraging groups. Local NGO staff, and family planning workers are a good source of advice.

Remember that a group could be as simple as those farmers attending a single event or a series of field days at a result demonstration.

- ***assisting with the preparation of an extension programme which addresses the needs of women and of resource poor farmers within the block, in advance of each season***

You must pay particular attention to the needs of women and resource poor farmers. To do this:

- Conduct problem censuses with women and resource poor farmers
- Do an *Alternatives Analysis* to decide what extension activities will give the most help to low income groups, and women

The "Thana and District Agricultural Extension Planning Guide Book" explains how to do an *Alternatives Analysis*. Ask your TAO or SMO to assist you if necessary

- The "No and Low Cost Extension Methods" guidebook gives information on which extension methods work well with low income groups, and women. It also gives ideas on how to best use these extension methods

At the seasonal Thana Planning Workshops you will need to:

- Remember that all extension programmes should :
 - Focus on activities that farmers think will be useful to them
 - Use extension methods that work best for the type of extension message and the target group you are trying to reach
 - Try to minimize cost while still reaching as many farmers as possible with the information they need, and in ways best suited to the information needed
 - Include activities for all types of farmers and target categories.
- Plan seasonal extension activities that are useful for women and resource poor farmers
- Select or adjust extension messages to ensure that women and resource poor farmers can afford to use the technology improvements you suggest
- Select or adjust extension methods to ensure that your extension messages reach women and resource poor farmers

Your personal knowledge of the women and resource poor farmers in your block will permit you to select and adjust messages and extension methods to be most useful to them.

Refer to the District and Thana Planning Cycle (Figure 3), and the District and Thana Planner (Figure 4). These show you the yearly times for seasonal planning activities.

Seasonal extension programmes are developed on the basis of farmers needs.

Your role is to assess and confirm needs with farmers.

You will help the SMO and TAO develop a Thana Extension Plan at the Thana Planning Workshop. Before each Thana planning workshop, you must:

- Have done your farmer information needs assessments
- Thought about the extension messages and extension methods you want to use

Once a draft seasonal plan is made you will check this plan with farmers to ensure that it meets their needs.

Figure 3: District and Thana Planning Cycle

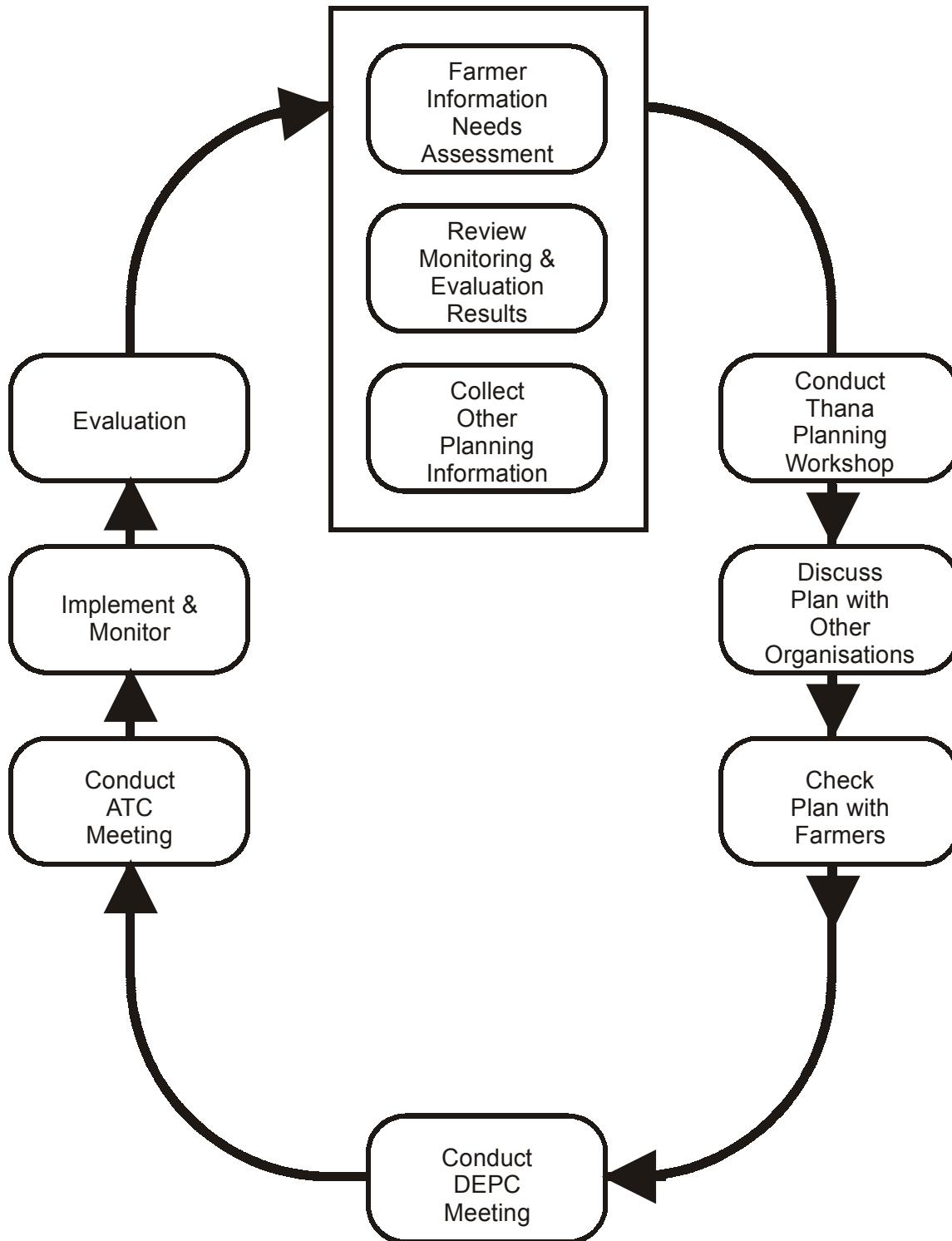


Figure 4: District and Thana Planner

ACTIVITY	TASKS	Kharif-II			Rabi						Rabi			
		July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	
Assess Farmer Information Needs	Conduct problem census, KAP survey, PRA and review other sources of information		///	///			====					■		
Review monitoring and evaluation results from previous year	Review DEMS/KAP reports. Decide what activities to continue/modify/cancel		///			====						■		
Collect other planning information	Collect information on credit, inputs, marketing, agro-ecological information, NGOs, other Govt. Private sector etc.			///			====					■		
Discuss with other organisations	Meet NGOs, Banks, Projects, Seed dealers. Decide which organisations to work with. Discuss shared activities and joint planning.			///			====					■		
Conduct workshop to prepare draft Thana Extension Programme and Budget	Complete list of problems. Invite other organisations to workshop. Prepare draft Thana Plan and Budget. Analyse problems, objectives and alternatives. Logical framework and plan of operations. Complete form A1.				///			====						■
Check the plan with farmers	BS review prepared plan with FINA groups. Thana compiles comments and amends plans. Send plan to Districts with form A1.				///				====					■
Conduct District Extension Programming Committee Meeting	Review and approve Thana Plans. Compile District Plan and Budget on form A. Send District Plan to ATC	DEPC					DEPC				DEPC			
Conduct Agricultural Technical Committee (ATC) meeting	Review and approve technical content of District Plans. Decide on priority problems for research. Identify potential topics for participatory technology development.		ATC				ATC				ATC			
Conduct local in-service training	Identify venue, schedule, resource people, participants and conduct staff training.			■					///	///			■	■
Develop District annual outline budget	Send to Director Field Services Wing a rough outline of activities and costs for the coming year.													
Implement and monitor seasonal plan	Use DEMS and other tools to monitor and adjust implementation. Use to improve quality of Extension Programme.	====	====	====	====	■	■	■	■	■	///	///	///	///
Conduct an evaluation	Summarise, analyse, interpret and report DEMS forms and other information	///			====							■		
Define and send national training/media requests to Head	Send training needs to Director Training Wing, and Media needs to Media Cell													

 Kharif-I
  Kharif-II
  Rabi
  Annual

- *planning a work programme, for approval by the subject Matter Officer*

Every two weeks you will complete your 14 days work programme (Figure 5 shown on page 17) the programme is completed on the basis of local farmers needs, within the scope of the overall current seasonal extension plan.

You can use the following steps to prepare a work programme:

- Decide what your realistic objectives are for the coming fortnight. Write them down
- List all activities for the coming fortnight
- Put the activities in order according to when they need to be done
- Fix specific dates and approximate times, remembering to include travel time. Do not plan activities from hour to hour. There are always unforeseen events or delays. Plan day by day, morning and afternoon
- Complete the work schedule, by marking the appropriate activity boxes on the appropriate days, then check it with thana level staff and get it approved and signed by the SMO and TAO
- Write your planned activities in your diary on the pages for that fortnight.

Indicators of Achievement

DAE's extension approach is results oriented. This means that you have a responsibility to enable farmers to make the best use of their resources - you are responsible for achieving results. How will you know that your work is producing results?

There are some things you can look for, called indicators, which will show that your work is effective. Here are some things to look for:

- More farmers are coming to you to ask advice
- Existing farmers groups ask you to attend their meetings
- Staff of other organizations come to you to ask advice, or to request you to help their beneficiaries
- Farmers are willing to participate freely in extension events without allowances
- Farmers decide to work together as a group, temporarily or permanently
- Farmers adjust their farming practices, and test new ideas
- Farmers increase their yields of their homestead or field crops
- Farmers increase their incomes

In your work schedule sheet, the final column is marked "other". You could use this column to set targets for yourself by using some of the ideas for indicators listed above. For example, you could decide that during a fourteen day period you will be successful if:

- During a field day 32 farmers are present
- After a field day, 10 farmers decide to test the new ideas they have observed
- After a field day, 22 farmers decide to work together for the rest of the season as an informal extension group
- A demonstration host farmer decides to keep using the technology after the demonstration has ended
- As a result of your advice a farmer decreases the cost of producing a crop by 10 percent
- As a result of your advice a group of female farmers associated with an NGO decide to use their credit to purchase improved garden seeds

You can make up your own indicators of success.

- *monitoring each season's extension programme within the block*

You should monitor the effectiveness for your extension programmes. This means that you work closely with farmers to see if the local extension programme is going well, solving local problems and meeting local needs.

- Monitor 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
- Check whether the extension activities are effectively meeting the needs of the different target categories of farm families
- Check whether farmers are becoming more interested in trying out and even adopting new technologies
- You could use indicators, discussed above, to help you to monitor extension effectiveness

Formal monitoring is done using the District Extension Monitoring System (DEMS). The District Extension Monitoring System (DEMS) is designed to provide information to assist in producing the Thana Extension Plan.

The DEMS system has a number of forms which require completion. These are filled out by the thana staff. A lot of the information to be entered in the DEMS forms comes from the Block Supervisor's Register and Field Day Reports. You will have to assist the thana staff in the completion and use of the Extension Monitoring System.

The Block Supervisor's Register contains forms where you should:

- record the details of each demonstration and field day in your block
- record relevant comments of visitors and supervising DAE staff

Information about field days should be recorded on the Field Day Report Forms.

You should complete the Block Supervisor's Register and Field Day Reports as best you can. Be sure to enter the information required in the correct spaces on the forms.

MEMBER:

- Wrong information is harmful. It is much better to have no information than to have wrong information.
- Sometimes it may not be possible to honestly give the information asked for on the forms. You should leave spaces blank if you cannot give correct information.

You may also be asked to undertake other monitoring work including, for example, crop estimations.

Figure 5: Block Supervisor Work Programme Schedule

ADVANCED VISITING SCHEDULE OF BLOCK SUPERVISORS

TIME _____

SI No _____

Block _____

Union _____

Name of Thana _____

Address of BS's Camp _____

Date	Time		Place of Visit (House , Office of farmers groups, Para etc)	Works to be done during visit (put tick marks in appropriate box)									Others
	From	To		Participation in the farmers groups meeting	Demonstration plot visit	Participation and monitoring of crops and farms	Observation and monitoring of crops and farms	Visit of Progressive farmers/farm	Contact with farmers groups formed by NGO and other organisation	Problems Identification/visit to farmers house for solutions	Conducting Farmers training	Visit to TAO office for training and submitting report	
1	2		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

Counter signed

Signature of Subject Matter Officer

Signature of Block Supervisor

Thana Agriculture Officer

Name _____
Date _____

Name _____
Date _____

Comments:

1. Reasons must be written in BSs Diary if programme is not followed for whatsoever reason
2. Name of the person under which direction, other work, if carried out, should be written in BSs diary

- ***identifying innovative or adapted technology developed by farmers***

Farmers themselves are active developers of technologies. you can help with this by:

- Observing useful and effective technologies that farmers are using, which are new to you
- Helping farmers develop better technology through Participatory Technology Development (PTD). PTD is discussed in the No and Low Cost Extension Method Guidebook
- 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 farmers field
- Raising local farmers 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.

- ***following up participants in DAE farmer training***

After farmers and farmers groups have attended extension events you should visit the farmers who came and ask how useful the event was. This helps the monitoring of extension programmes.

The following questions are a useful guide when following up an event:

- 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?
- Is any other training needed for farmers to be able to apply what they have learnt?
- Should another event be arranged?
- What other extension activities are required?

Asking these questions will help to make decisions about what needs to be included in the 14 day work programme.

Remember:

- Farmers usually make changes after a number of opportunities to examine new technologies
- Repeating the same messages using several different extension methods will help farmers to decide. For example : an organized training session, followed by a field day, followed by a farm walk to see other farmers using the new technology or producing the new crops. The No and Low Cost Extension Method Guidebook has more examples
- Follow up will help you decide what other methods you should use to assist farmers to learn enough to make decisions on the new technology

- *maintaining a daily diary*

Your diary performs two main functions:

- Basic time management
- A method for recording farmer's problems and needs

Each day is represented on a separate page, and the page is divided into two main areas.

- The top part of each page is to record visits and notes about topics discussed. You can also use this section to enter your fortnightly work programme activities, as well as appointments, meetings and other obligations you may have
- The bottom is for recording information that farmers or farmer's groups have requested, and problems that they have raised

You are responsible for providing a timely and accurate answer. Even if an answer cannot be provided, explain to the farmers why this is, and what is being done about it. This information is verified and countersigned by the SMO or TAO.

An example of a completed page is shown on page 20.

At the front of the diary are pages for drawing a block map, and for recording information about your block.

Figure 6 : Example of a Completed Page in Block Supervisors Diary

Month	Day	Date
Farmer Visited		Topics Discussed
Problems Identified:		
Problems Not Solved:		
Action on Unsolved Problems/Date/Signature		

- *passing information on farmer's problems and information needs to the Subject Matter Officer*

During day to day work, if farmers request a piece of advice that you can not supply, or mention a problem you cannot solve, it is recorded in a special section in the diary.

Tell the farmer(s) that an attempt to find an answer will be made, give a date and time that you will report back, record this as part of the 14 day work programme.

Report the problem to thana level staff at your regular reporting meetings. If they know the answer return to the farmers at the arranged time and explain the solution.

If an answer is not given, the TAO will refer it to district level, and you should return to the farmers and explain the situation.

Farmers must be kept informed, even if there is no immediate solution.

Some problems will require years of research in the research institute. For other problems, there may be a suggested solution which the farmers can test through Participatory Technology Development. For other problems, there may be a solution which can be published in the monthly district bulletin.

The Problem Census and seasonal extension planning form a long cycle. The problems farmers report will not be dealt with immediately. A review of problems noted in your diary, at regular reporting meetings, helps with quicker responses. If needed, emergency extension activities can be planned. For example, an emergency leaflet, or an emergency public meeting could be held. This is especially the case with outbreaks of disease, which can occur at any time.

District Bulletin:

Look again at Figure 2. Notice that the diary and the problem census are useful tools to help you identify farmers needs and, if they cannot immediately be addressed, pass them upwards to find a possible solution. This information flows upwards in DAE.

There is also information that flows downwards in DAE. An example shown in Figure 2 which enables information to flow downward is the District Bulletin. You should make sure you are given a copy of the bulletin at the first weekly meeting each month at the Thana office.

The bulletin ensures that all Block Supervisors in a district are:

- Informed about the local extension programmes
- Aware of new ideas and technologies to discuss with farmers
- Informed about the activities of colleagues in other thanas
- Informed about the activities of District level staff

The bulletin is not a replacement for the former lesson sheets and impact points under the T and V system. The lesson sheet and impact point system has been dropped from the revised extension approach.

However, the bulletin will contain some technological information which is generally relevant for the month. It is your responsibility to read the bulletin carefully, and to decide how to use the information which it contains.

The bulletin is mostly a source of ideas. If it contains information about something that you think is relevant to your farmers, discuss it with them. Many things in the bulletin will not necessarily be of interest to your farmers or relevant to local conditions.

Remember that it is your bulletin. This means that you can contribute information, ideas and your experiences. Write any ideas that you have for the bulletin, and give them to your TAO. He can submit your contributions to the Training Officer in the district. Ideas you can think about submitting include:

- Difficult problems you have encountered during your work, and how you have addressed them
- A farmer information need you have not been able to address
- A technology your farmers have developed
- Your successes in technology adoption

Remember that the bulletin has limited space. Everyone in the district can submit items. This means that it will often not be possible to include all the items received for bulletin publication. Don't be discouraged if your item does not appear immediately.

- attending the monthly formal training session

The formal monthly training includes presentation of prepared lessons and skill practice. The purpose is to teach new skills, agricultural practices and analytical methods. At present, much of this training is centered around the new skills required for the operation of the revised extension approach.

Remember that you can not assist farmers if:

- You do not know how to use the extension method properly
- You do not know about the technology being discussed.

You must decide what training you need. This will depend on:

- What extension methods are the best to use with your farmers
- What information and assistance your farmers have asked for
- What you already know and feel confident about doing.

If you feel you need training in order to carry out your extension activities properly you must discuss your training needs with your Thana Officers. Your advice will help them to choose training topics for the on-going formal monthly training sessions.

How you can learn what you need to know:

- You can 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 you. This is the quickest way to get the information you need.
- You may find training materials at your Thana Office, or with input dealers, NGOs and others. You can study these materials yourself or with guidance from your SMO and learn what you need to know. This is called "Self-directed" learning and allows you to focus on exactly the information you need.

- If enough Block Supervisors have requested the same training, a course may be arranged by your Thana Officers for your monthly formal training session.
- You may participate in an appropriate training course in your area being conducted by another organization such as an NGO.
- If there is a general need for training in a particular subject, DAE headquarters will arrange country-wide training. This is the case with the Extension Approach training courses you have taken.
- ***attending the regular training and reporting meetings each month***

You will attend the thana office on three weeks every month and at other times if there is an emergency. Your Thana Agriculture Officer will decide which days to hold the meetings. You should always bring your diary to every meeting.

The meetings in each month are as follows:

Week One - Review of activities and field situation, and informal training

- Presentation of your work programme for the next two weeks for approval by the Subject Matter Officer.
- A review of the current situation in the field, including discussion of farmers' problems, pest and disease incidence and availability of inputs. You will have recorded this information for your block in your diary.
- A summary of extension messages relevant to different categories of farmer and to the time of the year.
- A review of progress with implementation the extension programme for the current season.
- A review of BS extension visits and diaries.
- A review of programmes at demonstration plots.
- A general technical discussion, in which BSs can seek advice on any subject not covered in the extension messages and the trainers can determine BSs' level of knowledge on any topic which it is proposed for future training sessions.
- Discussion of administrative matters such as salaries, postings, leave, allowances, housing, performance appraisal, etc.

Be sure to ask for your District Bulletins at this meeting.

Week Two - Formal monthly training session (described above)

Week Three - Review of activities and field situation, and informal training (same as week one)

Week Four - No regular meeting. Special meetings may be called from time to time

It is very important that you come together with your colleagues regularly. This will help you to feel like and be treated as an important member of the Thana Extension Team.

Your contributions are absolutely required because you are the main connection between DAE and the rural public.