

INDIVIDUAL METHODS

Individual methods are used in extension teaching in recognition of the fact that learning is an individual process and that the personal influence of the extension worker is an important factor in securing people's participation in extension activities. The various methods which come under the classification of individual methods include farm and home visits, office calls, telephone calls, personal letters, informal contacts and result demonstrations.

Farm and home visits are essential elements of extension education.

They provide a means of personal communication between the farm family and the extension worker in an environment where they can discuss matters of common interest in privacy and without the distractions and interruptions commonly experienced in group extension activities. Farm and home visits serve the following useful purposes:

- (1) To acquaint extension worker with the farmer and farm family
- (2) To answer specific requests for help
- (3) To gain firsthand knowledge of problems faced by the farmer or villager
- (4) To explain a recommended practice
- (5) To follow up and observe the results of recommended practices
- (6) To plan an activity such as demonstration, or a meeting
- (7) To invite the farmer or villager to participate in a planned activity
- (8) To discuss policies and programmes
- (9) To recruit, train or encourage a local volunteer leader

Careful and adequate preparation is the key to a successful visit as with all extension methods. Visits are extensive in terms of time and transportation. Preparation for a visit will include a review of all the known facts about the farm, the farmer and the family, specific information concerning the problem, purpose or activity involved and materials such as leaflets and samples that may be left with the farmer.

Office calls are made by the farmer for the purpose of satisfying a felt need. They are an expression of interest by the farmer in a need which he hopes the extension worker can help

him meet. Office calls provide the extension worker with knowledge of the needs of the farming community. Like farm and home visits, they help to build farmers' confidence in the worker and create good public relations. They are less expensive and time consuming than farm and home visits. However, the farmer may feel less at home in the office and may be sensitive to the attitude of the worker. He may also be too shy to disclose the real purpose of his visit.

Telephone calls are initiated by either the farmer or the extension worker, they are useful in giving specific information relating to treatment of known diseases, control of insect pests or to answer questions on interesting broadcasts or requests for bulletins and leaflets. Telephone calls cannot be used where telecommunication system is under-developed.

Personal letters are useful in answering request for information, as follow-up after visits and office calls and in contacting local volunteer leaders. The use of letters as a teaching method is quite limited in countries lacking an efficient postal service or where many rural residents are illiterate. Be careful that the information you give in a letter is simple, understandable and complete without being wordy or including unnecessary information. Remember, the words you put on paper are all he has to go by in determining your meaning.