Farmers Field School

1989 by experts working for the FAO in Indonesia

FARMERS FIELD SCHOOL:

a group of farmers meet regularly in a field at weekly intervals during a crop season. After observation of crop dynamics, they discuss and take economical decisions about the best crop management practices for that week, under the guidance of trained facilitator.

NEED for FFS:

- **Inappropriate and imbalanced nutrient use and declining soil productivity**

- **Indiscriminate use of pesticides leading to increased cost of cultivation**

- **Inadequate research and extension support to Small & Marginal farmers**

Objectives of FFS:

1. Increasing the productivity of crops receiving irrigation through Field demonstrations and training programmes.
2. Growing of crops as per the prevailing market trend / need.
3. Reducing cost of cultivation by adopting improved management practices and procuring the critical inputs in time – community based approach.
4. Finally making farmer ‘an Expert’ in decision making.

Approach:

• Primary learning material is the crop field. The training is fully field oriented, participatory and discovery based – *Learning by doing*.

• Aims at teaching Science to farmer in his field.

• Farmers can observe and analyze the dynamics of crop ecology across the season.

• The training curriculum is based on local needs.

• Changes in the curriculum / topics can be made depending upon the prevailing situation and to be done in consultation with farmers / participants.

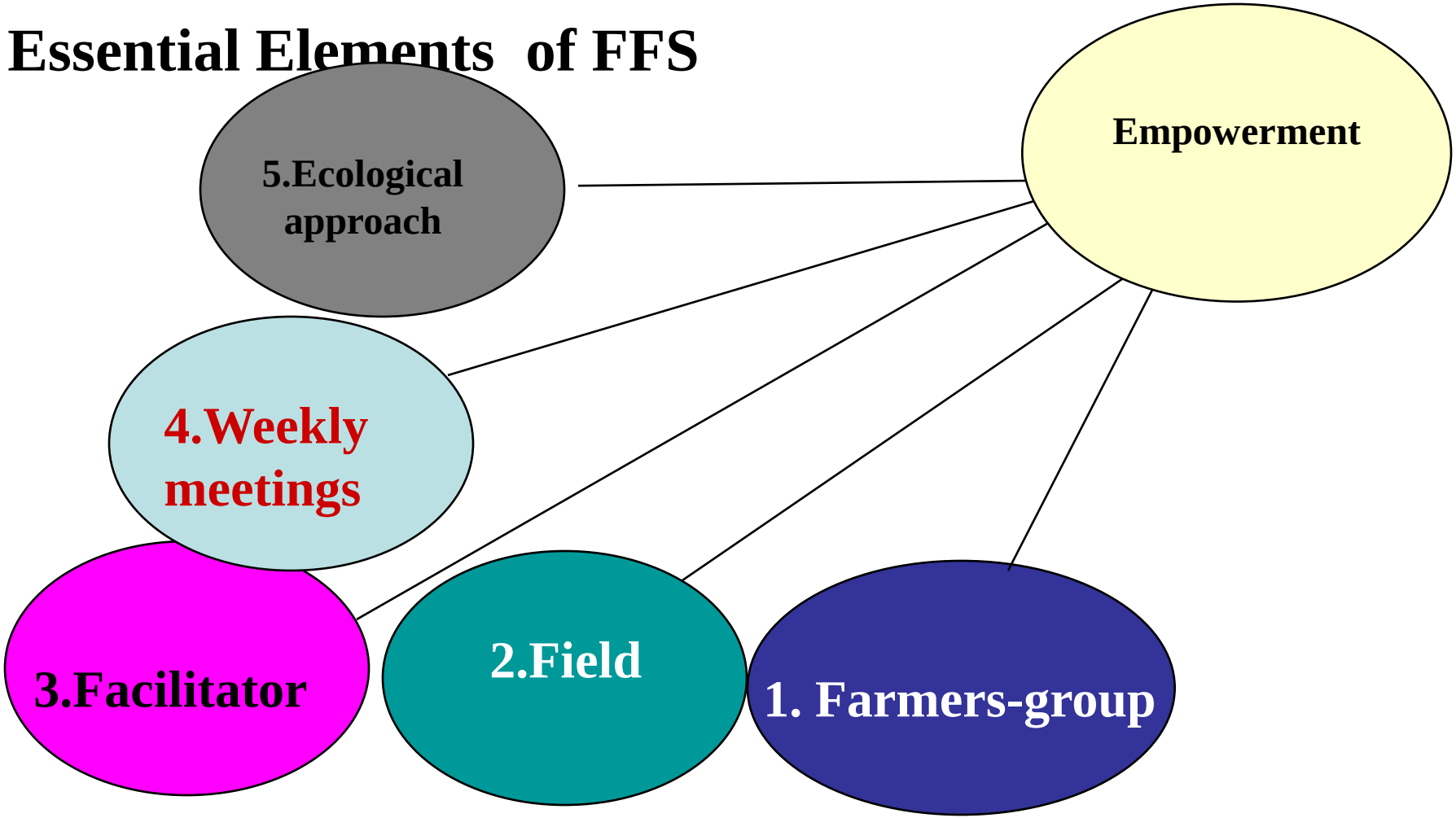
Education of Farmers Through

- Farmers Training Centers (FTC)
- On Farm Demonstration (OFD)
- Farmers Field School Approach

Difference Among 3 Major Approaches for Educating the Farmers

Sl.No	Area	Conventional Method	Demonstrations	FFS
1	Involvement of Farmers	Less	Less	More
2	Group approach	Nil	less	Working in small groups for sharing of ideas, knowledge, skills
3	University recommendations/ Technology	Create awareness	Disseminate knowledge	Validate recommendations through field studies
4	Learning	Create awareness	knowledge	learning by doing
5	Farm Management Decisions	Create dependence on external agencies	Create dependence on external agencies	Empowering farmers as decision makers
6	Development of Skills	Less	Less	More Technical, attitudinal skills
7	Provide technology or science	Provide technology	Provide technology	Transfer of science & Technology
8	Adoptability of Technology	Less	Less	High
9	Ecological approach	Regional specific	Regional specific	Individual field specific
10	Cost of technical input or wisdom	High & borrowed	High & borrowed	Less: Synthesized local (traditional) & external wisdom

Essential Elements of FFS



Quality Indicators of Successful FFS:

1. Difference in productivity observed and reasons for such increase.
2. Causes for high yields identified.
3. Problems in Water management addressed and probable solutions achieved.
4. All the Solutions for effective management be published through pamphlets, press, media, tom-tom etc.
5. Higher yields and higher returns.
6. Reduction in cost of cultivation.
7. Increase in Science of farmers and making farmer Expert in scientific information and making the farmer as a role model.
8. Planning cropping pattern as per the market needs.

Conclusion

- Voluntary participation
- Learning by doing
- Extension worker as facilitator