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A study on Profile Characteristics of Agricultural Officers in State Department of Agriculture, Andhra Pradesh

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Authors' contributions

This study was carried out in collaboration and help with other authors. Author DVK designed the study, collected the data, performed statistical analysis and wrote first draft of the manuscript. Authors NSSG and HKP guided in analysis of the study and corrected the final manuscript. Author CK managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Extension systems in India have played immense role in delivering the services to the farmers there by increasing the agricultural productivity. Agricultural officers (AO's) working in the State Department of Agriculture had greater responsibilities on them to convey recent advancements to the farmers. The profile characteristics of the AOs shows how well they are equipped and can plan the activities that befit the farmers. The study was conducted in southern zone of Andhra Pradesh by considering 90 respondents. Data collection was done by structured questionnaire and personal interview method. The results revealed that majority of AOs stands at medium category with respect to variables like achievement motivation, perceived workload, morale, job involvement and attitude towards farmers. Whereas, characters like mass media exposure, interpersonal contact and self-reliance were at high category showing us the characters that need to be improved and can be used to our advantage for extension services delivery. Personal characters like age, gender, marital status, family size and type, rural-urban background, education and health were also studied and gave us the information on present status of the AO's.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The recent advancements in the field of science and technology led to the use of modern techniques in agriculture, contributing a great deal to the development. Though different extension approaches operate in India, but they not have access to any source of information [1]. Extension systems in India had an important role in addressing concerns like huge yield gaps, rigorous use of inputs, and declining natural resources productivity are constrained by human, financial, and infrastructural resources limitation [2].

Human characteristics are a set of attributes consisting of knowledge, skills, traits, social roles and motives that allows an individual to perform his duties and manage the situations efficiently [3]. The personal, psychological economic characters of an extension officer improve their job performance [4]. Working forces with maximum job commitment, job involvement with high standards of achievement motivation and a satisfied organizational climate always provide the added advantage for any organization [5]. Mass media participation, rural –urban background, training received, job involvement, and perceived work load improves the performance and satisfaction levels of extension workers which in turn have positive effect on farming [6]. Depleting health conditions was also one of the factor that leads to poor performance of an employee [7]. Extension assistants who were not satisfied with opportunities for promotion, their remuneration, and work environment had led to poor satisfaction which in turn affects the farming community [8]. By these it was clear that a study was needed to know the profile characteristics of agricultural officers working in the state department of agriculture with whom we are transferring the technologies to the farmers.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the southern zone of Andhra Pradesh having 3 districts i.e., Chittoor, Cuddapah, and Nellore. Ex post facto research design was an employee for the study as the phenomenon was already happened. At the time of the study, the employees working at the Mandal headquarters as agricultural officers (AO's) were considered as the respondents. Thirty AO's from each district were selected

following the disproportionate sampling method. Thus the total respondents for the study were 90. Profile characteristics consisting of personal, socio-psychological, and work related were considered for the study by reviewing previous studies. Statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were used for the study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the agricultural officers were examined in terms of age, gender, family size, marital status, job experience, education qualifications, rural-urban background, achievement motivation, perceived workload, health, morale, job involvement, organizational climate, e-learning, level of aspirations, training received, mass media exposure, commitment to work, interpersonal contact, attitude towards farmers, self-reliance, conveyance, and time management. The distribution of respondents according to profile characteristics were presented in Table 1.

It was observed that, 71.11% of the AO's belonged to the middle age group, 18.89 per cent of them belonged to young age and only 10% of them belonged to the old age group. It might be due to regular recruitments of AO's in the state department of Andhra Pradesh. The results were in line with the findings of [9] that the majority of the extension personnel were in the middle age group. With respect to gender, 56.67% of AO's were males whereas, 43.33% of them were females. It is evident from the study that majority (71.11%) of agricultural officers belonged to a small family having up to 4 members while 28.89% of them belonged to medium (5-8 members) family size. There is no big family size according to the study. The results were in similarity with the findings of [10] that the majority of extension specialists were belonged to medium family size.

Nowadays most of the families living as nuclear families in response to their work. Hence in the study, it is shown that majority of them had small families. The majority (85.56%) of AO's were married whereas, 14.44% were single. B.Sc. is considered as the minimum degree for job qualification. Hence majority (54.44%) of the AO's were having B.Sc. as their education qualification. With respect to job experience, 42.22% of AO's were in the medium level, while

34.44% of them in low level and only 23.33% of AO's found in the high level category. The results were in line with [6] that employees were joining the service immediately after completion of their degree and the majority of them were in medium category of job experience.

The majority (62.22%) of respondents have come from rural background. This is due to the fact that they were from the farming families having the interest to serve rural people. Whereas, 37.78% of them are from an urban background and it may be because of their parents' occupation and settlement in taluk places. It was observed that 40.00% of AOs were in good health condition and with nearly the same percentage 37.78% of them regarded their health condition in very good state. Whereas, 22.22% of them were in moderate health condition. Majority (61.11%) of AO's were having high level of knowledge on e-learning. While 27.78% of them has low level and 11.11% has medium level e-learning skills. Department has provided tablets for each AO's by providing free internet facility which made easy accessibility of information. This was supported by [11] that cent percent of subject matter specialists (SMS) were using mobile phones but only 70% of them were utilizing the internet facilities.

Majority (52.22%) of the agricultural officers had medium level of achievement motivation, whereas 26.67% and 21.11% of them belonged to low and high level of achievement motivation. The reason for the present finding may be low promotional opportunities and situational factors which has put majority of AO's in medium category. Similar findings were reported by (6) and (12). It was evident that, 44.44% of the AO's perceived their workload as medium, followed by 32.22 of them as light and only 23.33% of them perceived it as heavy. With respect to morale 36.67%, 33.33% and 30.00% of them were belongs to medium, high and low category of morale. Similar findings were reported by (6) and [12] that the majority of the employees were belonged to medium category of achievement motivation and perceived workload.

The perusal of above table revealed that, 40.00% of the AO's belonged to medium level of job involvement, followed by 32.20% and 27.78% of them belonged to high and low level of job involvement respectively. More than two-fifth (42.22%) are having high category of

organisational climate, followed by 36.67% and 21.11% of low and medium category of organisational climate, respectively heavy. Organisational goals and mutual trust among the employees made them to have high category of organisational climate. This results were in line with [12] where majority of AO's belonged to medium category of organisational climate. It was observed that 35.56 had low level of aspiration and 34.44% and 30.00% had a high and medium level of aspiration, respectively. A high level of aspiration among the AO's can be improved by providing them with incentives, rewards, and required financial assistance for fulfilling their needs.

The majority of the AO's had undergone in service training and in some new need based technologies which are needful for farmers. It was observed that, 36.67% of AO's had medium level of training and same percentage of them had high level of training. Whereas, 26.67% of them had a low level of training. The majority of the AAO's undergone induction training for a period of 6 months on different subject matter areas was reported by [13]. It was observed that, majority of AO's belonged to high category of mass media exposure with 56.67%. Whereas, 43.33 of AO's belonged to a low level of mass media exposure. It was evident from the above table, that majority (63.33%) of AO's belonged to high commitment to work whereas, 36.67% of them have low commitment to work. This results were agreed with the findings of [10] that commitment to work bring satisfaction to extension officer which improves his performance.

A perusal of data revealed that, 37.78% of them have high interpersonal contact followed by 34.44 per cent had medium and 27.78% had a high level of inter-personal contact. It could be seen from above table that, the majority (47.78%) of them were in neutral state of attitude towards farmers. Whereas, 28.89% and 23.33% of them had favourable and unfavourable state of attitude towards farmers. The results were in line with [12] where majority of AO's had neutral state of attitude towards farmers. This might be due to the majority of the agricultural officers had less rural orientation. It was also observed that, majority (47.48%) of them had high extent of self-reliance. About 32.22% and 20.00% of them had the medium and low extent of self-reliance.

Table 1. Profile characteristics of the Agricultural Officers (AOs) n=90

Sl. No.	Variables	Category	Criteria	Respondents	
				Number	Per cent
1.	Age	Young	> 35	17	18.89
		Middle	35-50	64	71.11
		Old	< 50	9	10.00
2.	Gender	Male	2	51	56.67
		Female	1	39	43.33
3.	Family size	Small	Up to 4	64	71.11
		Medium	5-8	26	28.89
		Big	>8	0	0.00
4.	Marital status	Married	2	77	85.56
		Unmarried	1	13	14.44
5.	Job experience	Low	<8.66	31	34.44
		Medium	8.66-13.41	38	42.22
		High	>13.41	21	23.33
6.	Education qualification	B.Sc.	1	49	54.44
		M.Sc.	2	41	45.56
		Ph.D.	3	0	0.00
7.	Rural-urban background	Rural	<9.32	56	62.22
		Urban	>9.32	34	37.78
8.	Achievement motivation	Low	<14.84	24	26.67
		Medium	14.84-19.07	47	52.22
		High	>19.07	19	21.11
9.	Perceived workload	Low	<6.30	29	32.22
		Medium	6.30-8.26	40	44.44
		High	>8.26	21	23.33
10.	Health	Moderate	<8.16	20	22.22
		Good	8.16-9.57	36	40.00
		Very good	>9.57	34	37.78
11.	Morale	Low	<51.85	27	30.00
		Medium	51.85-57.06	33	36.67
		High	>57.06	30	33.33
12.	Job involvement	Low	<25.33	25	27.78
		Medium	25.33-28.69	36	40.00
		High	>28.69	29	32.2
13.	Organisational climate	Low	<20.03	33	36.67
		Medium	20.03-22.68	19	21.11

Sl. No.	Variables	Category	Criteria	Respondents	
				Number	Per cent
14.	e-learning	High	>22.68	38	42.22
		Low	<8.55	25	27.78
		Medium	8.55-9.96	10	11.11
15.	Level of aspiration	high	>9.96	55	61.11
		Low	<12.34	32	35.56
		Medium	12.34-16.51	27	30.00
16.	Training received	High	>16.51	31	34.44
		Less	<8.04	24	26.67
		Medium	8.04-11.76	33	36.67
17.	Mass media exposure	More	>11.76	33	36.67
		Low	<12.44	39	43.33
		High	>12.44	51	56.67
18.	Commitment to work	Low	<0.69	33	36.67
		Medium	0.69-1.71	0	0.00
		High	>1.71	57	63.33
19.	Interpersonal contact	Low	<14.91	25	27.78
		Medium	14.91-17.25	31	34.44
		High	>17.25	34	37.78
20.	Attitude towards farmers	Favourable	<22.70	21	23.33
		Neutral	22.70-25.21	43	47.78
		Unfavourable	>25.21	26	28.89
21.	Self-reliance	Low	<4.05	43	47.78
		Medium	4.05-4.75	0	0.00
		High	>4.75	47	52.22
22.	Conveyance	Less	<6.34	37	41.12
		Medium	6.34-6.99	0	0.00
		Better	>6.99	53	58.88
23.	Time management	Less often	<563.78	28	31.11
		Often	563.78-683	37	41.11
		Most often	>683	25	27.78

A critical look at Table 1 shows that, the majority (58.88%) of them belonged to a better level of conveyance, whereas, 41.11% of them had less level of conveyance. Similar findings were observed by [10] and he suggested that extension specialists should be provided with adequate funds and vehicles for quick mobility. The majority (41.11%) of AOs had to manage their time often, whereas 31.11% and 27.78% were had less often and most often time management.

4. CONCLUSION

The study made a clear understanding about the profile characteristics of agricultural officers working in the state department of agriculture, Andhra Pradesh. It can be concluded from the study that the majority of AO's were middle and having small family size with BSc (Ag) as educational qualification and most of them belonging to rural background. It was also seen that majority of AO's expressed a medium level of achievement motivation, perceived workload, morale, job involvement and attitude towards farmers. It can be improved by providing incentives, promotions and rewards based on their performance and counselling on how to work with the farming community. It was also seen that mass media exposure, e-literacy, self-reliance and interpersonal contact and conveyance were high among AO's which is a promising factor that can help to promote the technologies. Time management skills were also needed for efficient functioning and delivery of the extension services.

CONSENT

As per international standards or university standards, respondents written consent has been collected by the author.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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