

Constraints faced by the Agricultural Officers of Kerala State Department of Agriculture

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Abstract: The present study was undertaken in the three zones of Kerala viz., Thiruvananthapuram from South Kerala, Thrissur from Central Kerala and Kasaragod from North Kerala, during the academic year, 2017-18. Totally 90 Agricultural Officers of which 30 from Thiruvananthapuram, 30 from Thrissur and 30 from Kasaragod district were randomly selected using simple random sampling procedure of the 30 respondents from each district it was ensured that 15 were female and 15 were male respondents. The constraints were scored and ranked using a scoring procedure on a 4 point continuum. The five major constraints faced by the Agricultural Officers were excessive work load, lack of promotional opportunities, lack of proper training to the officer, lack of need based schemes and its implementation in different localities, political interference in day to day activity.

Key words: Job stress, Agricultural Officers, Constraints, Suggestions.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the backbone of our country and has a prime role in the growth and development in Indian economy. Most of the people have agriculture as their main occupation. Increase in agriculture production directly depends on the degree to which farmers use the improved agricultural practices and adoption of new technologies. The development of our nation is highly impossible without uplifting of farmers. It is through Agricultural Officers. The extension workers who act as a key communicator between the farmer and the researcher and establishes two way process of communication. The effectiveness of all these programs solely depends on the job performance and efficiency of Agricultural Officers who acts as an approachable extension personal at *panchayath* level. The work load, the pressure in dealing with farmers, handling two or three offices at a time, lack of promotional opportunities, burdened with office work and hence getting little time to be in farmers field thereby being in the unhappy list of farmers, outlay sourcing and distribution problems were the practical reasons that could have affected the minds of Agricultural Officers who opined that they face stress during work. Even majority of the Agricultural Officers in the Kerala State Department of Agricultural Officers felt a number of constraints in their daily life. The job stress and psychology of these officers affects their interaction with farmers and various decision making process. A proper documentation of the problems experienced by the tribal people is possible only through a constraint analysis. Ashalatha *et al.* (1999) pointed out that major constrains experienced by the Agricultural Assistants working in Krishi Bhavans in Kerala were lack of timely availability of agricultural inputs, lack of problem solving ability of senior officers, lack of technological upgradation and training in time, lack of promotional opportunities, low basic facilities in the villages, non availability of audio visual aids for extension works, high political pressure, lack of transport facilities and high work load. Mohan (2000) found that lack of transportation facilities, political interference in day today activities, lack adoption of new technology by the farmer, lack of support from seniors, work pressure and unavailability of inputs in time were the main constrains faced by AAOs in Northern districts of Karnataka. Mishra (2005) observed that the main constrains faced by the men and women extension officers of Karnataka State Department of Agriculture reported that transportation problems, lack of availability of inputs in time, frequent taluk meetings, redundant political involvement, vacant posts and less manpower in the department creating overburden on existing staffs, high work pressure, technical ineffectiveness, and lack of recognition from the superiors.

II. METHODOLOGY

With the help of detailed review of literature and discussion with experts 15 constraints faced by the Agricultural Officers were enlisted. The constraints so identified were included in the interview schedule and respondents were asked to indicate their response for each constraint on a 4 point continuum ranging from most important, important, least important and not important. The constraints were finally scored and ranked.

Table 1. Methodology for identifying and measuring the constraints.

Sl. No.	Statement	MI (4)	I (3)	LI (2)	NI (1)
1	Political interference in day to day activity				
2	Excessive work load				
3	Lack of promotional opportunities				
4	Poor communication				
5	Lack of proper training to the officer				
6	Lack of timely availability of inputs				
7	Irregular pay of TA				
8	Lack of basic living facilities in village				
9	Lack of career development opportunities				
10	Lack of incentives and reward system for better performance				
11	Poor interpersonal relationship among employees				
12	Lack of need based schemes and its implementation in different localities				
13	Lack of opportunities for job enrichment				
14	Delayed disbursement of salary and other allowances				
15	Inadequate administrative support				
M= Most important, I= Important, LI= Least important, NI=Not important					

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table.2. shows the distribution of respondents based on the major constraints perceived in the three zones of Kerala viz., Thiruvananthapuram from South Kerala, Thrissur from Central Kerala and Kasaragod from North Kerala.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents based on the major constraints in three districts.

Sl. No.	Statement	Mean scores	Rank
1	Excessive work load	360	1
2	Lack of promotional opportunities	333	2
3	Lack of proper training to the officer	323	3
4	Lack of need based schemes and its implementation in different localities.	297	4
5	Political interference in day to day activity	296	5

Out of the several constraints studied, the major constraints identified in the case of Agricultural Officers were, excessive work load, lack of promotional opportunities, lack of proper training to the officer, lack of need based schemes and its implementation in different localities, political interference in day to day activity.

SUGGESTIONS FOR OVERCOMING THE CONSTRAINTS

A number of suggestions can be put forward for the better performance of the Agricultural officers based on this study conducted and constraints identified. They were,

- Arranging induction training programme for the Agricultural Officers will also improve their competency and self confidence in the job to be performed.
- Time bound promotions should be strictly follow.
- Different schemes should be implemented based on its needs and suitability in different localities.
- Cadre strength should be increased based on the area of the Panchayath.
- A clerical post should be made in the Krishi Bhavan in order to reduce the work load.

- Efforts should be made for developing an effective and supportive relationship among subordinates and boss.
- Provision of rewards/incentives for the honest, sincere and hardworking employees.
- Data bank and different schemes should be digitalized in order to reduce the paper work.

IV. CONCLUSION

From this study it can be concluded that the major constraints faced by the respondents were excessive workload, lack of promotional opportunities, lack of proper training schedule of the officer, lack of suitability of different schemes and its implementation in different localities and political interference in day to day activity. The constraints faced by the respondents need attention from the policy makers and government for improving the performance of the Agricultural Officers.

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