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Profile of extension personnel working in state agriculture department of Nagpur district of Maharashtra

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Abstract

Agricultural extension personnel play a crucial role in facilitating the dissemination of agricultural information and technologies to the farming communities. However, their work environment, workload, motivation, and job stress can significantly influence their overall effectiveness and professional well-being. The present study was conducted in Nagpur district of Vidarbha region in Maharashtra State. Out of 14 talukas of Nagpur district, 10 talukas were purposively selected in this investigation. Out of 165 working extension personnel from these talukas, 90 extension personnel were purposively selected as respondents for the study. Data were collected with the help of a pre-tested interview schedule by personally contacting respondents at their workplace and analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, correlation and multiple regression analysis. Exploratory design of social research was adopted in this study. The findings revealed that, majority of the extension personnel belonged to Assistant Agriculture Officer (AAO) cadre, most were male, were B. Sc. graduates, majority had medium service experience, all had received training for a period of less than 10 days up to 1-3 months. Most of them were posted at a distance of 16-25 Km from their headquarters to their workplace. Majority extension personnel reported high availability of facilities (information communication facilities). Majority extension personnel exhibited medium to low achievement motivation, and medium to high levels of job stress, highlighting the need for appropriate rationalization of workload and well-balanced responsibilities, suitable motivational strategies, supportive work environments and effective stress-management interventions to enhance their motivation and reduce job-related stress.

Keywords: Extension personnel (Assistant/Deputy Agriculture Officer), Cadre, Service experience, Training received, Distance from headquarters and Job stress

1. Introduction

Agricultural extension serves as an essential link between agricultural research and farming communities. The success of extension programmes depends not only on the availability of improved technologies but also on the competence, motivation and professional commitment of the personnel responsible for transferring these technologies to farmers. Extension personnel occupy a strategic position within the agricultural development system because they facilitate technology dissemination, provide technical guidance, coordinate government programmes and establish communication between farmers and various agricultural institutions (Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010; Davis & Sulaiman, 2014; FAO, 2022) ^[16, 4].

In India, the State Agriculture Department constitutes one of the principal public extension agencies responsible for implementing agricultural development programmes at the grassroots level. Through its organizational network extending from the state headquarters to villages, the department disseminates improved production technologies, coordinates government-sponsored schemes, conducts demonstrations and training programmes, monitors field implementation, facilitates input distribution, and provides advisory services to farmers (FAO, 2001; Swanson, 2008) ^[15]. At the operational level, Assistant Agriculture Officers and Deputy Agriculture Officers serve as the primary interface between the Department and farming communities. Their responsibilities require continuous interaction

with farmers, local institutions, input agencies, research organizations, and administrative authorities (Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, 2024). In view of this, the present study was undertaken to study the profile of the extension personnel which may help us to understand the level of Job perception and Job satisfaction among the extension personnel in State Agriculture Department of Nagpur district of Maharashtra.

2. Methodology

The present study was conducted in Nagpur district of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra State. Nagpur was purposively selected due to the presence of a strong network of extension personnel working under the close supervision of divisional Joint Director of Agriculture (JDA) in Nagpur district. Out of 14 talukas of Nagpur district, 10 talukas, namely Nagpur Rural, Hingna, Kamptee, Katol, Kalmeshwar, Savner, Ramtek, Parseoni, Kuhi and Umred were purposively selected for the present study based on the maximum availability of extension personnel in each taluka.

Out of 165 working extension personnel including 115 Assistant Agriculture Officer (AAO) and 50 Deputy Agriculture Officer (DAO) from these selected talukas, 90 extension personnel including 62 Assistant Agriculture Officer (AAO) and 28 Deputy Agriculture Officer (DAO) were purposively selected as respondents for the study based on who have been working for three years or more in their respective positions. Exploratory research design was adopted in this study. The variables Cadre, Gender, Education, Service experience, Training received, Distance from headquarters to workplace, Facilities available (information communication facilities available), Achievement motivation and Job stress were studied to understand the profile of extension personnel. The data was collected through the personal interview method using a pre-tested structured interview schedule and analyzed using mean, standard deviation, frequencies, percentages, correlation and multiple regression analysis for drawing meaningful interpretations.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to profile of extension personnel

Sr. No.	Profile characteristics	Categories	Respondents (n = 90)	
			Frequency	Percentage
1	Cadre	Assistant Agriculture Officer (AAO)	62	68.89
		Deputy Agriculture Officer (DAO)	28	31.11
2	Gender	Male	48	53.33
		Female	42	46.67
3	Education	Diploma	25	27.78
		B. Sc.	41	45.55
		M. Sc.	23	25.56
		Ph. D.	01	01.11
4	Service experience	Low (Up to 06.49)	14	15.55
		Medium (06.50 – 16.81)	61	67.78
		High (Above 16.81)	15	16.67
			Mean = 11.65	SD = 05.16
5	Training received	No training	00	00.00
		Less than 10 days	90	100.00
6		11 – 30 days	35	38.89
		1 – 3 months	90	100.00
		More than 3 months	00	00.00
6	Distance from headquarters to workplace	At headquarters & up to 05 Km	12	13.33
		06 to 15 Km	22	24.44
		16 to 25 Km	33	36.67
		Above 25 Km	23	25.56
7	Facilities available (Information communication facilities available)	Low (Up to 04.33)	10	11.11
		Medium (04.34 – 06.81)	24	26.67
		High (Above 06.81)	56	62.22
			Mean = 05.57	SD = 01.24
8	Achievement motivation	Low (Up to 16.06)	17	18.89
		Medium (16.07 – 24.62)	58	64.44
		High (Above 24.62)	15	16.67
			Mean = 20.34	SD = 04.28
9	Job stress	Low (Up to 111.29)	12	13.33
		Medium (111.30 – 139.29)	54	60.00
		High (Above 139.29)	24	26.67
			Mean = 125.29	SD = 14.00

The extension personnel were distributed into different categories based on their selected profile characteristics and the results were presented in Table 1.

- **Cadre:** More than two-third of the extension personnel (68.89%) were from the cadre of Assistant Agriculture Officer (AAO), followed by 31.11 per cent extension

personnel belonging to the cadre of Deputy Agriculture Officer (DAO) respectively. This may be attributed to greater representation of AAOs in field-level extension system and their direct involvement in various agricultural extension activities. This finding is supported by Chavhan (2015) ^[3].

- **Gender:** More than half of the extension personnel (53.33%) were males while, near to half of the extension personnel (46.67%) were females. This may be attributed to increased participation of women in Maharashtra State Department of Agriculture's recruitment drives in the recent years. This finding is supported by Udeh (2015) and Kusumalatha *et al.* (2021).
- **Education:** Near to half of the extension personnel (45.55%) were B.Sc. graduates, followed by Diploma holders (27.78%), M.Sc. graduates (25.56%) and Ph.D. holders (01.11%). This may be attributed to the greater availability of agricultural graduates at the undergraduate level and the relevance of B. Sc. Degree to field-level agricultural extension work. This finding is supported by Chavhan (2015)^[3] and Babu (2018)^[2].
- **Service experience:** More than two-third of the extension personnel (67.78%) had medium service experience, followed by 16.67 per cent extension personnel with high service experience and around 15.55 per cent of the extension personnel had low service experience. This may be attributed to the regular induction of extension personnel into the department and the accumulation of moderate years of service by a substantial proportion of employees. This finding is supported by Pavankumar (2015)^[14] and Amita (2020)^[1].
- **Training received:** All respondents (100.00%) had received training of less than 10 days as well as training of 1–3 months duration, while 38.89 per cent had received 11–30 days of training. This may be attributed to the compulsory foundational training of 45 days for AAOs and 12 days for DAOs respectively. This finding is supported by Hage Manty (2011)^[8], Nazir (2016)^[12] and Patole *et al.* (2025)^[13].
- **Distance from headquarters to workplace:** More than one-third of the extension personnel (36.67%) were posted between 16 to 25 Km distance from their headquarters to their workplace, followed by 25.56 per cent extension personnel who were posted above 25 Km distance respectively. Further, 24.44 per cent extension personnel were posted between 06-15 Km distance from their respective headquarters. While, 13.33 per cent extension personnel were posted at headquarters and up to 05 Km from their respective headquarters. This may be attributed to the geographical spread of the operational area and the field-oriented nature of agricultural extension services, which necessitates posting personnel at different locations to provide services to farmers. This finding is contradictory to the findings observed by Deotale (2017)^[5].
- **Facilities available (Information communication facilities):** Near to two-third of the extension personnel (62.22%) had reported high facilities available, followed by 26.67 per cent extension personnel reporting medium level of facilities available and 11.11 per cent extension personnel had reported low facilities were available. This may be attributed to the increased availability and use of modern communication technologies, which facilitate timely access, exchange and dissemination of agricultural information among extension personnel, farmers and departmental officials

respectively. This finding is contradictory to the findings observed by Tayade *et al.* (2022)^[17].

- **Achievement motivation:** Nearly two-third of the extension personnel (64.44%) reported medium achievement motivation, followed by 18.89 per cent extension personnel reporting low achievement motivation and 16.67 per cent extension personnel have reported high achievement motivation respectively. This may be attributed to the varying work situations, professional aspirations and opportunities to accomplish extension targets and address farmers' problems. This finding is supported by Babu (2018)^[2], Amita (2020)^[1] and Kusumalatha *et al.* (2021)^[9].
- **Job stress:** More than half of the extension personnel (60.00%) had expressed medium job stress, followed by 26.67 per cent who expressed high job stress and 13.33 per cent had expressed low job stress respectively. This may be attributed to the multifaceted nature of extension work, which involves considerable administrative responsibilities, time pressure, field-level duties, coordination with farmers and officials, and the need to meet diverse job demands. This finding is supported by Manjunath (2004)^[10], Deotale (2017)^[5] and Amita (2020)^[1], respectively.

4. Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that, majority respondents were Assistant Agriculture Officers (AAO). Most respondents were male and had B. Sc. degree. Majority respondents had medium service experience. Cent per cent respondents had received less than 10 days of training as well as 1-3 months of training. Most respondents were posted between 16-25 Km distance from their headquarters to their workplace. Similarly, majority respondents had reported high level of facilities (information facilities) were available. Further, majority respondents exhibited medium to low achievement motivation and medium to high job stress. This highlights the importance of creating a supportive and motivating work environment through appropriate rationalization of workload and well-balanced responsibilities, efficient capacity-building opportunities, supportive supervision and effective stress-management measures. Strengthening these aspects may contribute to improved Job perception and satisfaction thereby, enhancing the effectiveness of extension personnel in serving the farming community.

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