

Constraints Faced by the Extension Personnel in Exerting Their Professional Competence

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted in three districts of Karnataka including, Dharwad, Vijayapura and Bagalkot on constraints faced by the extension personnel working in KVK and Development Departments. Data were collected through questionnaire and statistical methods such as percentage, frequency and ranking were used for analyzing the data. Constraints were classified as institutional and personnel, A total of twelve institutional and seven personnel constraints were reported by the extension personnel. Among the institutional constraints, majority (94.73 %) of the extension personnel reported the constraints of 'bureaucratic delays and focus on paperwork', 'Inadequate staff' (77.19 %), 'less opportunities for promotion' (70.52 %) as the major constraints. While the major personnel constraints faced by the extension personnel were 'Lack of accurate and effective feedbacks due to time lag of functionaries' (92.98 %), 'Lack of coordination among the staff' (81.75 %) and Lack of advanced training (70.52 %).

Keywords: *Extension personnel, institutional constraints, personnel constraints*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this age of globalization, a knowledgeable and skilled individual can play a critical role in an organization's success. According to Seevers *et al.*(1997), [1] future extension professionals must be more skilled and visionary in order to meet the needs of a diverse audience. Extension staff must learn new knowledge and skills because only knowledgeable and skilled individuals can play a critical role in an organization's success in today's technological environment. To be a successful extension agent today, one must be knowledgeable not only in technical matters, but also in management, programming, communication, human relations, and leadership

However, there have been less data on the roles and performance of extension workers in the country, even though, there are sporadic studies on criticism that extension was not being able to perform the necessary changes in the rural community. The issue of professional competencies is not a new or unusual one for professional fields; the main purpose of identifying competencies is to clarify the essential behavioral standards and specific tasks needed by the employees and to determine to what extent these standards are met by the employees. KVKs and Development departments as a responsible organization for technology dissemination activities and thereby sustainable agricultural development would also require professionally competent employees to achieve its objectives. Realizing this situation, it is very critical to know the major constraints faced by the extension personnel in exerting the professional competencies and how it can influence their performance. Keeping the importance of the study in view, the present investigation was conducted in Dharwad, Vijayapura and Bagalkot district of Karnataka to elicit the constraints faced by the extension personnel.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area: The study was conducted in three districts including Dharwad, Vijayapura and Bagalkot of Karnataka. Questionnaire was prepared based on the objectives of the study and sent by post to extension personnel.

Experimental design: Simple random sampling design had been taken for the investigation. Data were collected from a total of 240 numbers of extension personnel operating in the Development Departments (Department of Agriculture and Department of Horticulture) and 45 extension personnel from different KVKs.

Statistical analysis: The collected data were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted in accordance with the objectives by using appropriate statistical techniques like percentage and frequency

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the present study, problems experienced by the extension personnel in exerting their professional competence were studied. Mean score and rank order for each problem were calculated. The data in this regard are depicted in Table 1.

As seen from the results in Table 1, the constraints have classified into institutional and personal, barriers. Among the institutional barriers, a high majority (94.73 %) of the extension personnel reported that, 'bureaucratic delays and focus on paperwork' as the major constraint. Inability to make priorities clearly might be a possible reason for the bureaucratic delays. 'Inadequate staff' was another important constraint faced by extension personnel which was indicated by 77.19 per cent the extension personnel, because of the inadequate staff the extension personnel have to do multiple roles and ultimately leading to job stress, timely recruitment of the staff should be done in order to avoid this problem. Other major constraints reported by the extension personnel were, 'Less opportunities for promotion' (70.52 %), 'Lack of infrastructure' (69.47 %) [3,4]. 'Lack of inputs at proper time' (69.47%) [2]. Lack of training need assessment (63.15 %) [5] Failure in delineating the work (multiple roles) (62.10 %), Failure to provide timely transportation facilities (57.89 %), Lack of training institutes and experts in the required areas (49.12 %) [5]. Delay in release of funds (38.59 %) and Lack of scientific literature (37.19 %) etc. that limited extension personnel's ability to acquire desired competencies.

Promotion encourages workers to perceive the company as one that provides them with opportunities for professional advancement. Employee productivity is increased by incentives like promotions, which also fosters healthy competition that helps organizations grow. Numerous organizations also offer rewards for employees who actively and responsibly contribute to the growth of their organizations. Promotion increases employee responsiveness and helps an organization run more efficiently.

In the case of personal barriers, majority of the extension personnel expressed lack of accurate and effective feedbacks due to time lag of functionaries' (92.28 %), lack of coordination among the staff (81.75 %), [8]. Lack of advanced training (70.52 %) [6,7] communication problem (69.12 %), lack of professionalism (65.26 %), lack of willingness to learn the new skills (56.84 %) and lack of computer literacy (50.52 %) as the major constraints.

Table 1. Constraints faced by extension personnel in exerting the professional competence

Indicators	Per cent	Rank
Institutional barriers		
Bureaucratic delays and focus on paperwork	94.73	1
Inadequate staff	77.19	2
Less opportunities for promotion	70.52	3
Lack of inputs at proper times	69.47	4
Lack of infrastructure	69.47	4
Lack of training need assessment	63.15	5
Failure in delineating the work (multiple roles)	62.10	6
Failure to provide timely transportation facilities	57.89	7
Lack of training institutes and experts in the required areas	49.12	8
Delay in release of funds	38.59	9
Lack of scientific literature	37.19	10
Apathy towards extension system and professionals	33.33	11
Personal barriers		
Lack of accurate and effective feedbacks due to time lag of functionaries	92.98	1
Lack of coordination among the staff	81.75	2
Lack of advanced training	70.52	3
Communication problem	69.12	4
Lack of professionalism	65.26	5
Lack of willingness to learn the new skills	56.84	6
Lack of computer literacy	50.52	7

4. CONCLUSION

Bureaucratic delays and focus on paperwork, Inadequate staff, less opportunities for promotion. Lack of inputs at proper time, lack of training need assessment, Lack of accurate and effective feedbacks due to time lag of functionaries, lack of coordination among the staff, lack of advanced training were expressed as the major constraints faced by the extension personnel in exerting the professional competence. The reported constraints are needed to be addressed seriously for the effective performance of the extension personnel. If the constraints are not immediately addressed, in due course of time, it will affect the overall success of Development Departments and KVKs.

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