

Profile Characteristics of Mandal Agricultural Officers of Telangana State

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ABSTRACT: The present study was undertaken to assess the profile characteristics of Mandal agricultural officers working in the department of Agriculture, Telangana. The study was conducted in three agro climatic zones in Telangana state. Forty mandal agricultural officers from each agro climatic zone were selected randomly. Total 120 respondent -MAOs were selected for the study. The data were collected with the help of interview schedule from respondents at their office. Ex-post facto research design was adopted in this study. The study had shown the results that the majority of MAOs fall under middle age group (35-50 years), more than half of total respondent- MAOs were male, majority were having graduate degree (B.Sc. Agri.) educational qualification with medium professional experience of 7-10 years, more than three fourth opined optimum perceived workload. Majority of the MAOs represented the high level of categories in case of 'information management', 'application of ICTs' and belonged to medium level category in case of 'Innovativeness' 'organizational culture' 'organizational climate' and 'job satisfaction'. The challenges of the study where trainees were spread in the entire Telangana state, but the sample size confined to only 120 trainees and the data on most of the aspects is based on the recall memory of the respondents. The findings of this study suggest that job satisfaction, organizational climate and culture can be improved to high category by providing incentives, promotions and rewards based on their performance and providing friendly atmosphere in the work place.

Keywords: Mandal agricultural officers, Department of agriculture, profile characteristics, trainings, Telangana.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays an important role not only in the economy of the Telangana state but also for achieving food security for the state and also for the country. Agriculture and its allied activities are integral to Telangana development. Besides the fact that the sector helps in ensuring food security, it also provides livelihoods to more than half of the state's workforce (around 60% of the workforce in the state is engaged in agriculture and allied activities) (Source: Agriculture action plan 2021-22 DOA, Telangana).

Mandal Agricultural Officers are extension personnel and the most important technical personnel at the Mandal level, who are entrusted with the vital role of inducing the farmers to take up improved agricultural technology to the farming community such as 1) To enable farmers to procure timely and cost-effective agricultural inputs such as seed, fertilizer, pesticides, farm implements and credit required 2) Provide services on soil, water, seed, fertilizer and pesticide testing 3) to implement programs of Natural Resource Management for sustaining land productivity and through watershed development approach 4) to provide technological and financial assistance in the event of calamities such as drought, floods, hailstorm etc. Human

behaviour is a set of attributes comprising of knowledge, skills, attitude, social role and motives which influences an individual to perform his duties and manage the situations efficiently (Shermon, 2004). The personal, psychological economic characters of an extension officer improve their job performance (Mishra *et al.*, 2011). Working forces with maximum job commitment, job involvement with high standards of achievement motivation and a satisfied organizational climate always provides the added advantage for any organization (Sarnaik *et al.*, 2020). 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 (Olatunji *et al.*, 2015).

This investigation attempts to study the profile characteristics of Mandal Agricultural Officers.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Ex-post facto research design was applied for the study. Telangana state was chosen purposively for the study as the investigator hails from Telangana. The study was conducted in three agro climatic zones in Telangana state. Forty trained Mandal agricultural officers from

two districts of North Telangana zone @ 20 per district, forty trained MAOs from two districts of Central Telangana zone@ 20 per district and forty MAOs from two districts @ 20 per district of Southern Telangana zone were selected randomly. Thus, a total of 120 respondents were selected for study. The statistical methods and tests such as frequency, percentage, class intervals, mean, standard deviation were used for the analysis of data. The data collected thus was tabulated, analyzed and the results were presented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of MAOs working in state agriculture department of Telangana was examined in terms of *i.e.* age, gender, Educational qualification, Professional experience, perceived workload, information management, application of ICTs, innovativeness, Organization Culture, Organizational Climate and job satisfaction Data was analyzed in respect to above listed variables and the results are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Profile of Mandal agricultural Officers working in state agriculture department.

| Sr. No. | Categories | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Age | | |
| i. | Young age (below 35years) | 45 | 37.50 |
| ii. | Middle age (36 - 50 years) | 69 | 57.50 |
| iii. | Old age (above 50years) | 6 | 5.00 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.00 |
| 2 | Education qualification | | |
| i. | Graduate (BSc (Ag)) | 79 | 65.80 |
| ii. | Post graduate (MSc (Ag)) | 40 | 33.40 |
| iii. | Doctorate (PhD) | 1 | 0.80 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.00 |
| 3 | Gender | | |
| i. | Male | 65 | 54.20 |
| ii. | Female | 55 | 45.80 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.00 |
| 4 | Professional Experience | | |
| i. | Less (< 7years) | 34 | 28.70 |
| ii. | Medium (7-10years) | 54 | 45.00 |
| iii. | More (>10 years) | 32 | 27.30 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.00 |
| 5 | Perceived work load | | |
| i. | Less work load (34-54) | 4 | 3.30 |
| ii. | Optimum work load (55-75) | 103 | 85.80 |
| iii. | Heavy work load (76-96) | 13 | 10.80 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.00 |
| 6 | Information Management | | |
| i. | Low (137-143) | 10 | 8.30 |
| ii. | Medium (143-149) | 51 | 42.50 |
| iii. | High (149-155) | 59 | 49.20 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.00 |
| 7 | Application of ICTs | | |
| i. | Less use (15-19) | 9 | 7.50 |
| ii. | Medium use (19-23) | 43 | 35.80 |
| iii. | High use (23-27) | 68 | 56.70 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.00 |
| 8 | Innovativeness | | |
| i. | Less (15-18) | 33 | 28.00 |
| ii. | Medium (18-21) | 64 | 53.00 |
| iii. | High (21-24) | 23 | 19.00 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.00 |
| 9 | Organizational culture | | |
| i. | Less favorable (14-17) | 16 | 13.30 |
| ii. | Medium favorable 17-20 | 71 | 59.20 |
| iii. | Highly favorable (20-230) | 33 | 27.50 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.00 |
| 10 | Organizational climate | | |
| i. | Less favorable (12-19) | 20 | 16.70 |
| ii. | Medium favorable (19-26) | 76 | 63.30 |
| iii. | Highly favorable (26-33) | 24 | 20.00 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.00 |
| 11 | Job satisfaction | | |
| i. | Low (18-26) | 15 | 12.80 |
| ii. | Medium (26-34) | 74 | 61.70 |
| iii. | High (34-42) | 31 | 25.80 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.00 |

Age. It could be observed from the Table 1 that, majority of the respondents (57.50%) belonged to middle age group followed by young age group category (37.50%) and (5.00%) belonged to old age group respectively.

From the above data, it was concluded that majority of the respondents belonged to middle to young age category. Middle age is a productive age in which an individual want to progress and tries hard to achieve the highest level of success in life. The findings are in line with findings of Kavyashree *et al.* (2021); Reddy *et al.*, (2017) where majority of the trainee-respondents belonged to 'middle age' group followed by young and old age groups.

Gender. It was evident from Table 1 that above half of the respondents were male officers (54.2 %) and female skewed in favor of Male. Therefore, specific policy interventions are needed to balance the gender representation in government. Similar findings were reported by Kshatriya *et al.* (2020); Reddy *et al.* (2017) that the majority of the training officers belonged to male gender.

Professional experience. It is evident that majority of the respondents are having medium professional experience of 7-10 years (45%) followed by less experience below 7 years (28.3%) and followed by the more experienced officers (above 10 years).

Educational qualification. The results presented in the Table 1 depict that majority of the MAOs were graduates had completed B.Sc. (Ag) (65.8%) followed by post-graduation. M.Sc. (Ag) (33.33%), PhD (Doctorate) is only (0.8%). As minimum qualification required for the entry into the department of agriculture is Graduation *i.e.*, BSc (Ag), majority of the respondents had graduate degree educational qualification. The results were in line with findings of Gopika (2015); Kavyashree *et al.* (2021) that employees were joining the service immediately after completion of their degree and the majority of them were in medium category of job experience

Perceived work load. It is quite satisfactory to note that 85.80% of respondents perceived that they had optimum level of workload (Table 1). These respondents are mostly in their mid-career and know how to balance their workload. The reason for another 3.3 percent respondents to perceive their workload as low could be that they are newly recruited as Mandal agricultural officers and are not much involved independently responsibilities. It is only a matter of time that even these would get mainstreamed in to taking more functional responsibilities in the next few years. Very few (10.8 %) trainees had perceived workload as heavy, probably they are the senior officers taking all the responsibilities. Similar findings were reported by Gopika (2015) that the majority of the employees were belonged to medium category of achievement motivation and perceived workload.

Information management. Results in Table 1 indicate that majority of the respondents had high (49.20%) management followed by medium (42.50%) and high (8.30%).

Application of ICTs. More than fifty per cent (56.70%) of the trainees utilize ICT tools followed by 35.80 % of respondents and less percent (7.50%) of the respondents used ICT tools for gaining knowledge or updating themselves on latest information, training or teaching, knowing the availability of inputs or contacting the input agencies. All MAOs were using computers and mobile phones for preparing and sending report through emails. Kabir and Roy (2015) reported similar findings that majority of the extension personnel used the ICT tools for information retrieval and dissemination.

Innovativeness. It is evident from Table 1 more than half of the trainee respondents (53.00%) had medium level of innovativeness. High level of innovation proneness was noted among less than one-fourth of the respondents (19.00%) and 28.00 per cent of the respondents were in less innovative category.

Organizational culture. It is clear from the study that majority of the respondents opinioned that their organizational culture was moderately favorable (59.2%) followed by highly favorable (27.5%) and 13.3 % respondents had given as less favorable. It has been observed from the data that a majority of the respondents opined that coordination is medium among staff, organization has a strong sense of discipline and supervision, the leadership in the organization exemplify mentoring, facilitating, organizing efficiency. Findings were line with the findings of Ahmed and Shafiq (2014) where there was high uncertainty avoidance in the organization and higher the uncertainty avoidance better will be organizational performance.

Organizational climate. From Table 1 it is clear that 63.3 percent of the respondents agreed that their organizational climate is medium favorable followed by 20 percent highly favorable climate and less favorable climate by 16.7%. Majority opined that there are too many rules and regulations in the organization but they can make decisions and solve problems without checking with supervisors in each step of the work. These results were in line with Kavyashree *et al.* (2021) where majority of AO's belonged to medium category of organisational climate.

Job satisfaction. Majority (61.7%) of the trainees were in the 'medium ' category of job satisfaction followed by 25.8 per cent and 12.5 per cent in 'high and low categories of job satisfaction. Hence, it could be concluded that majority of the respondents had medium to high levels of job satisfaction. Kavyashree *et al.* (2021) reported similar findings that 40.00% of the AO's belonged to medium level of job satisfaction, followed by 32.20% and 27.78% of them belonged to high and low level of job satisfaction respectively.

CONCLUSION

The present study revealed that majority of the respondent -MAOs are in the medium category for their profile characteristics except in information management and application of ICTs. The results indicated Mandal agricultural officers, being

professional graduates has got lot of scope for further improvement of the scores of profile characteristics.

FUTURE SCOPE

Mandal agricultural officers' are important technical personnel at mandal level and their performance is influenced by their profile characteristics. Hence, more relevant independent variables can be selected and studied. This study was limited to small sample size (120 respondents), which limits the larger generalizability of the results. Similar studies may be conducted by taking the larger sample size covering almost all mandal agricultural officers in the state. Constraints in implementation of new techniques learnt and application aspects at field level must be studied to solve the problems faced by farmers in order to design appropriate interventions for the benefit of extension personnel.

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Conflict of Interest. None.

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