

## Problems Experienced and Suggestions Offered by Agricultural Officers of Andhra Pradesh

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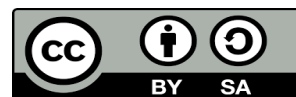
### ABSTRACT

Agricultural officers were the grass root level workers who worked directly with the farmers in implementing the development activities. Competency and satisfaction of them on their job makes all the difference in smooth functioning of the development initiatives. Problems encountered by them need to be revised according to the suggestions given by them for successful implementation of the extension delivery system. The present study was conducted in 3 districts of Andhrapradesh viz., Chittoor, Cuddapah and Nellore with 90 sample size following ex-post facto research design. Political interference, farmers' interest in subsidies rather than technology and no proper office facilities were the major problems experienced by the agricultural officers which affected their competence and satisfaction levels. Suggestions offered by them to improve their competency and satisfaction were good audio-visual aids, conveyance facilities and good working environment and office facilities.

**Keywords:** Agricultural Officers (AO's), Problems of Agricultural Officers, Suggestions offered by Agricultural Officers

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### INTRODUCTION

The Indian population is highly dependent on agriculture and many development activities have been taken up by the Indian government to increase the agriculture production and productivity. One such is National Extension Service (NES) programme in 1953 consisting of Village Level Extension Workers (VLEW) to bring about socio-economic transformation of the rural people by providing knowledge and technical know-how. Still there is a considerable gap between the technology developed by research stations and its usage in the farmer's field. This is due to inadequate and outdated professional training and poor mobility of extension workers. In order to take over aforementioned deficiencies Training and Visit system (T and V) was suggested by Daniel Benor to improve competence and satisfaction of the Agricultural officers.

State department of agriculture is implementing various programmes for the benefit of the farmers. The success of these programmes depends on how well they are planned, implemented and how effectively they are reaching the farmers. Extension personnel being the bridge between research stations, government schemes and farmers need to have certain skills and abilities to perform the roles properly. Perception and evaluation of the job, needs, values and expectations from the agricultural officers in turn affect their satisfaction and performance (Spector, 1997). Agricultural officers in Tamil Nadu were facing a lot of problems which restrain their work viz., political interference, lack of office accommodation, less opportunities for promotion, lack of inputs at proper time, lack of transport facilities (Vijay Babu, 2005). Recognition to good work, required material and equipment for conducting demonstrations, adequate funds affected the performance and satisfaction levels of the Agricultural officers (Madhu, 2001).

Suggestions given by agricultural officers need to be kept in

mind and revised for smooth functioning of the work. In time availability of agricultural inputs, material availability, new technology and training in time, basic facilities improved the performance of Agricultural officers and in turn improved the farming community. (Kedarnath *et al.*, 2013). Incentives based on workload, providing good visual aids and timely sanctioning of program and budget release improved the decision making and satisfaction of the AHO's (Gopika, 2014). The extension personnel have a great responsibility on their shoulders to bring fruitful results. Problems faced by agricultural officers in carrying out their work responsibilities in turn affect the program implementation and farming community. Thus, the study was undertaken here to study the problems faced by agricultural officers and suggestions offered by them to perform their job better.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was confined to three districts of Andhra Pradesh viz., Chittoor, Cuddapah and Nellore which belong to the southern NARP zone. Thirty Agricultural officers from each district were selected for the study by using a disproportionate sampling technique. Thus, a total sample size consists of 90. Ex-post facto research design was employed for the study.

For identifying the problems, some of the statements regarding the problems that are frequently faced by the Agricultural Officers were provided under 4-point continuum viz., to a great extent, to a moderate extent, to a least extent and not at all a problem, score of 4, 3, 2 and 1 are given to them respectively. Based on the total sum of scores for each statement the problems were ranked, where a high score indicates the great extent of the problem. 7 Coming to suggestions, some of the statements containing the suggestions that are regularly suggested by extension

personnel were given to mark under 4-point continuum as needs great attention, needs moderate attention, needs least attention and doesn't need any attention with a scores of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Later the scores were summed for each statement by all the respondents and the statement showing high score is regarded as the suggestion that needs greater attention. Similarly, all the statements were ranked based on the scores obtained.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Problems experienced by Agricultural Officers (AOs)**

The problems encountered by the AOs while discharging their duties are presented in Table 1 and 2. It is evident from table 1 that, out of all the problems provided in the statements, farmers are more interested in inputs/ subsidies rather than technology/ information was recorded to a great extent by 37.78 per cent of the respondents. Whereas the statement, there is no proper office facilities, lack of time to implement programs and lack of guidance by superior officers are regarded to have moderate extent, least extent and not at all a problem by 36.67, 47.78 and 38.89 per cent of the Agricultural Officers. It is observed from the table 2 that, the extent of problems as expressed by the AOs were Political interference in implementing schemes/ programmes interest of the farmers in inputs/subsidies rather than technology/ information with mean score 2.575 ranked first followed by interest of the farmers in inputs/subsidies rather than technology/information with mean score 2.70 ranked second, there is no proper office facilities with mean score 2.66 ranked third, There is no proper cooperation between different developmental departments in the local areas mean score 2.54 ranked fourth.

**Table 1:** Extent of problems experienced by Agricultural Officers (AOs)

Statement	To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To least extent	Not at all a problem
Farmers are not practicing the technologies you have recommended	17 (18.89)	22 (24.44)	36 (40)	15 (16.67)
Farmers are more interested in inputs/subsidies rather than technology/ information	34 (37.78)	18 (20)	15 (16.67)	23 (25.56)
Political interference in implementing schemes /programmes	27 (30)	29 (32.22)	25 (27.78)	9 (10)
Lack of time to implement the programmes	11 (12.22)	24 (26.67)	43 (47.78)	12 (13.33)
There is no proper cooperation between different developmental departments in the local areas	19 (21.11)	30 (33.33)	22 (24.44)	19 (21.11)
Lack of recognition /appreciation for good working	12 (13.33)	25 (27.78)	32 (35.56)	21 (23.33)
There is no proper office facilities	21 (23.33)	33 (36.67)	20 (22.22)	16 (17.78)
Over burden of work	19 (21.11)	5 (5.56)	40 (44.44)	26 (28.89)
Lack of guidance by superior officers	5 (5.56)	12 (13.33)	38 (42.22)	35 (38.89)

AOs also expressed other problems like, Farmers are not practicing the technologies you have recommended with a mean score of 2.46 ranked fifth, followed by Lack of time to implement the programmes with mean score 2.38 ranked sixth and Lack of recognition /appreciation for good working with mean score 2.31 is ranked seventh. Overburden of work and Lack of guidance by superior officers were ranked eighth and ninth with a mean score of 2.19 and 1.86 respectively.

**Table 2:** Ranking of problems according to their mean scores

Statements	Mean score	Rank
Farmers are not practicing the technologies you has recommended	2.46	V
Farmers are more interested in inputs/subsidies rather than technology/ information	2.70	II
Political interference in implementing schemes/programmes		
Lack of time to implement the programmes	2.38	VI
There is no proper cooperation between different developmental departments in the local areas	2.54	IV
Lack of recognition /appreciation for good working	2.31	VII
There is no proper office facilities	2.66	III
Over burden of work	2.19	VIII
Lack of guidance by superior officers	1.86	IX

The major problem of political interference while carrying out the job was perceived since they are working under panchayat raj institutions. The other reason might be, when a scheme was implemented in the state department of agriculture under a certain name after elections that same program got to change its name in the favor of the ruling party. Hence, there is a confusion among the farmers as well as AOs in delivering these schemes. Therefore, appropriate modifications are essential for required and timely promotional policy. Majority of farmers have small land holdings and they are poor so they may be interested in inputs/subsidies rather than technology/information. Agricultural offices located in the rural areas are facing problems like frequent power cuts, no proper building for storage of fertilizers and other inputs which leads to improper office facilities.

### Suggestions offered by AOs for improving the Job Competence and Job Satisfaction

The suggestions for improving the job competence and job satisfaction of agricultural officers are presented in Table 3 and 4. It is evident from table 3 that, out of all the suggestions good audio-visual aids are required for conducting any training programmes was recorded to need greater attention by 53.33 percent of the respondents. Whereas, the suggestions Conveyance facility to be provided to AO's, Programmes are to be designed according to the needs of farmers and Timely sanctioning of programmes is very were regarded to have moderate, least and doesn't need any attention 31.11, 42.22 and 50.00 per cent of the Agricultural Officers.

**Table 3:** Suggestions offered by AOs for improving the Job Competence and Job Satisfaction (n=90)

Statement	Greater attention	Moderate attention	Least attention	Doesn't need any attention
Good Audio -visual aids are required for conducting any training programmes	48 (53.33)	24 (26.67)	11 (12.22)	7 (7.78)
Basic infrastructural facilities be available for Agricultural officers	29 (32.22)	23 (25.56)	28 (31.11)	10 (11.11)
Vacant posts should be filled at regular interval.	5 (5.56)	11 (12.22)	30 (33.33)	44 (48.89)
Timely sanctioning of programmes is very important	16 (17.78)	4 (4.44)	25 (27.78)	45 (50)
Release of budget by the organization should be timely	6 (16.67)	18 (20)	32 (35.56)	34 (37.78)
Programmes are to be designed according to the needs of farmers	12 (13.33)	15 (16.67)	38 (42.22)	25 (27.78)
Conveyance facility to be provided to AO's	32 (35.56)	28 (31.11)	10 (11.11)	20 (22.22)
More powers and responsibility should be given to AO's	10 (11.11)	7 (7.78)	36 (40)	37 (40.11)

It could be observed from table 4 that, the suggestions as expressed by AOs are Good Audio visual aids are required for conducting any training programmes with 3.26 mean score ranked first followed by Conveyance facility to be provided to AOs with a mean score of 2.80 ranked second, Basic infrastructural facilities be available for Agricultural officers with a mean score of 2.79 ranked third, Programmes are to be designed according to the needs of farmers with a mean score of 2.16 ranked fourth, Release of budget by the organizations should be timely with a mean score of 1.96 ranked fifth, Timely sanctioning of programmes with a mean score of 1.90 ranked sixth, More powers and responsibility should be given to AOs with a mean score of 1.89 ranked seventh, vacant posts should be filled at regular ranked eighth with a mean score of 1.74.

It could be observed that the major suggestions as expressed by AOs are good audio-visual aids, followed by conveyance facilities to the agricultural officers. This implies that the majority of the respondents were facing problems like not having proper extension delivery materials like projectors. There is no proper conveyance to the Agricultural Officers for

**Table 4:** Ranking of suggestions based on their Mean scores (n=90)

Statements	Mean score	Rank
Good Audio-visual aids are required for conducting any training programmes	3.26	I
Basic infrastructural facilities be available for AOs	2.79	III
Vacant posts should be filled at regular intervals.	1.74	VIII
Timely sanctioning of programmes is very important	1.90	VI
Release of budget by the organization should be timely	1.96	V
Programmes are to be designed according to the needs of farmers	2.16	IV
Conveyance facility to be provided to AOs	2.80	II
More powers and responsibility should be given to AOs	1.89	VII

visiting the villages still they are depending on auto rickshaws, buses and their own vehicles at their cost which leads to delay of services.

### CONCLUSION

It was evident from the study that agricultural officers were experiencing political, communicational and work environment problems and they suggested providing good extension delivery materials and conveyance facilities. These issues can be solved by teaching communication skills to AO's on how to interact with farmers, by providing a workable

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office environment and by ensuring AO's have proper knowledge on the schemes which are being implemented. It is of utmost importance to consider the suggestions of AO's in view and weigh from the angle of successful implementation of the extension system and make the system efficient in transfer of technology.

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