

**Research Note**

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## Perceived Level of Importance and Competency of Agricultural Extension Officers in Agriculture and Allied Activities

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### ABSTRACT

*Training is the process of assisting a person for enhancing one's efficiency and effectiveness at work. A study was conducted in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu to ascertain the perceived importance and competency of agriculture extension officials and their training needs. The first six ranked training needs of the respondents in the study area were found to be integrated nutrient management, integrated water management, integrated weed management, agricultural waste management, organic farming and integrated pest management.*

**Keywords:** *Training need; Extension officers; Competency*

Training has been recognized as an important input in improving the professional competence of extension personnel for effective transfer of technology to the farming community.

The success of agricultural extension and its role in agricultural development doesn't stop its ability to transfer know-how to farmers, but also on its capacity to create active and positive interactions between agriculture and the other officials involved in the process of agricultural development in order to understand and learn from practice and help them identify and clarify where the needs and experience (Saleh, et al., 2015). Training in any form is intrinsic to organizational effectiveness

and efficiency. The study was conducted to ascertain the perceived importance and competency of agriculture extension officials and their training needs.

### METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. Random sampling was used to select 70 respondents from Coimbatore district. Block level extension officials were selected which includes Assistant Director of Agriculture, Deputy Agricultural Officer, Agricultural Officer and Assistant Agricultural Officers. All the thirteen extension workers of these blocks were selected as sample for the study. A Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score (MWDS) was calculated to describe overall rankings for each of the

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competencies. To determine the Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score (MWDS), the following statistical methods were used: A discrepancy score was calculated for each individual on each competency by taking the importance rating minus the ability (competency) rating. A weighted discrepancy score was then calculated in each individual for each of the professional competency by multiplying the discrepancy score by the mean importance rating. A mean weighted discrepancy score for each of the competencies was calculated by taking the sum of the weighted discrepancy scores and dividing by the number of

observations. Using the mean weighed discrepancy scores, the competencies were then ranked and the area of training need by the farmers was found.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Extension officers' overall perceived level of importance of agriculture and allied activities

The overall perceived level of importance of agriculture and allied activities of the respondents were calculated and analyzed and presented in Table 1. By using mean and standard deviation the respondents were categorized in to three categories.

**Table 1.**  
**Extension Officers' overall perceived level of Importance and Competency of Agriculture and allied activities**

(n=70)

Sl.No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Extension officers' perceived level of importance of agriculture and allied activities</b>			
1	Low	15	21.40
2	Medium	42	60.00
3	High	13	18.60
<b>Extension officers' perceived level of competency of agriculture and allied activities</b>			
1	Low	14	20.00
2	Medium	44	62.90
3	High	12	17.10

It is found from Table 1 that three-fifths (60.00%) of the respondents had perceived up to medium level on importance of agriculture and other allied activities for their job followed by 21.40 per cent and 18.60 per cent of the respondents had medium and high level.

### Extension officers' overall perceived level of competency of agriculture and allied activities

It is found from the table that more than three-fifths (62.90%) of the respondent had perceived up to medium level on competency of agriculture and other allied

activities for their job followed by 20.00 per cent and 17.10 per cent of the respondents who had medium and high levels respectively.

### Training needs of the respondents

The ranking of training needs is given in Table 2.

**Table 2.**  
**Training needs of the respondents**

Sl. No.	STATEMENT	MWDS	RANK
1	Integrated nutrient management	2.235129	1
2	Integrated water management	2.093076	2
3	Integrated weed management	1.996622	3
4	Agricultural Waste management	1.915744	4
5	Organic farming	1.771064	5
6	Integrated pest management	1.745168	6
7	Post-Harvest Management	1.646275	7
8	Marketing intelligence	1.469319	8
9	Farm Crop Management / crop planning	1.419779	9
10	Integrated disease management	1.407394	10
11	Nursery Management	1.320698	11
12	Agro forestry	1.231188	12
13	Integrated farming system	1.122162	13
14	Farm mechanization	0.697692	14
15	Soil Health Management	0.57797	15
16	New extension methods (Farmers' Field School, Farm School etc.,)	0.477951	16
17	Drought Management / Dry farming	0.404579	17
18	Seed production technologies	0.118596	18
19	ICT applications in Agriculture	0.05067	19
20	Farmers' organization	0.05611	20
21	Managerial Skills	0.2721	21

From the table, it is found that the first six training needs according to Mean Weighed Discrepancy Score were integrated nutrient management, integrated water management, integrated weed management, agricultural waste management, organic farming, and

integrated pest management. Organic farming is also gaining momentum among farmers and other stakeholders for getting chemical free agricultural commodities. Hence, the extension workers should upgrade their knowledge and skill through training programmes.

Majority of the respondents required training both in knowledge and skill level in the areas like allied enterprises, integrated nutrient management, integrated water management, integrated weed management, agricultural waste management, organic farming, and integrated pest management . So it is proposed that suitable trainings should be organized and imparted in the above mentioned areas so as to improve the knowledge and skill of the change agents.

## REFERENCES

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