Emotional Intelligence of Agricultural Officers of Kerala State Department of Agriculture

Reshma A. Victor[1] and A. Anilkumar[2]

ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in the three zones of Kerala viz., Kasaragod from North Kerala, Thrissur from Central Kerala and Thiruvananthapuram from South Kerala. In this study an attempt has been made to measure the emotional intelligence of panchayat level Agricultural Officers of Kerala State Department of Agriculture, under Krishi Bhavan System. A sample of 90 Agricultural Officers was selected by using simple random sampling. Emotional Intelligence was the dependent variable of the study. A well-structured interview schedule was used for collecting the data from the respondents. The data were tabulated and inferences were drawn after appropriate statistical analysis. The results showed that the scenario of existing status of emotional intelligence skills of respondents was good as most of them were in medium to high category.

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural officer has a pivotal role to play in Agriculture sector and they act as intermediaries between research and farmers. They operate as facilitators and communicators; helping farmers in their decision-making process.

Agricultural extension officers encourage farmers to adopt new, improved methods of farming, using a variety of methods to reach farmers i.e. organising study groups for farmers, 'farmer days', demonstrations, lectures and literature, as well as informing the media. The effectiveness of such usage solely depends on the job performance and efficiency of Agricultural Officers. The work load, the pressure in dealing with farmers, handling two or three offices at a time, burdened with office work and hence getting little time to be in farmers field thereby being in the unhappy list of farmers, are a few practical reasons that could affect the minds of Agricultural Officers while executing their duties.

In this study, three districts in Kerala were selected *viz.*, Kasaragod from North Kerala, Thrissur from Central Kerala and Thiruvananthapuram from South Kerala because job stress varies with region. The

[1] Assistant Professor and [2] Dean, College of Agriculture, Vellayani, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala - 695 522

area cultivated and crops differ from region to region. In Kasaragod district each respondents has to handle two to three *Krishi Bhavans* unlike Agricultural Officers in other districts (Victor and Anilkumar, 2019). Job stress and emotions of these officers affect their interaction with farmers and various decision making process.

Research has revealed that, a person with high emotional intelligence can manage their negative emotions and stress in a better way. Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in decisive interaction between individuals and their work environment. It is a crucial factor responsible for shaping success in life and psychological well being. Emotional intelligence is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, motivating ourselves for managing emotions well, in ourselves and in others (Salovey and Mayer, 1990).

Responsibilities are always related with some sort of stress. The officers who had high emotional intelligence manage their negative emotions in their workplace and report fewer psychological problems with high level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Emotionally intelligent people are more adaptive to the environment and more productive for the organization. There had been no testing system in place for Emotional Intelligence in Kerala State Department of Agriculture. Therefore a study to analyze the emotional intelligence of Agricultural Officers of 'Kerala State Department of Agriculture' is of high relevance and importance.

METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken in the three zones of Kerala *viz.*, Kasaragod from North Kerala, Thrissur from Central Kerala and Thiruvananthapuram from South Kerala. The Agricultural Officers working in the Kerala State Department of Agriculture in Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur and Kasaragod were randomly selected for the present study. Totally 90 Agricultural Officers of which 30 from Thiruvanathapuram, 30 from Thrissur and 30 from Kasaragod district were randomly selected using simple random sampling procedure of the 30 respondents from each district. It was ensured that 15 were female and 15 were male respondents. A well structured open ended interview schedule was used for data collection from the Agricultural Officers. The results were analyzed with the help of different statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and Kruskal - Wallis test.

The Emotional Intelligence inventory scale, which was developed by Goleman (1995) has been used for this study. The instrument had 50 statements that assess emotional intelligence based on the sub-components *viz.*, self awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and social skill.

Self awareness as the conscious knowledge or ability to monitor our own emotions, character and feelings. It is the key cornerstone to emotional intelligence. Awareness of our own emotions improves our chance of making rational decisions based on conscious processes rather than unconscious

emotional conditioning. Improvement of self – awareness can enhance our overall effectiveness and job satisfaction.

Self regulation is the ability to monitor and manage our own feelings, behaviour, emotion, and thoughts. A person with high level of self regulation is better able to manage their behaviour in the workplace and develop and manage good relationships with their colleague.

Motivation is one of the most important things that a person should possess. Motivation is the process of stimulating people to action to achieve their goal.

Empathy refers to the ability of a person to understand another person's thoughts, feelings from their point of view, rather than from our point of view.

Social skill means handling skills well in interaction with others. Social skills are the skills we use to communicate with each other both verbally and non- verbally. All these components directly or indirectly influence the Agricultural Officers work environment.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Total emotional intelligence score was calculated by adding the scores of 5 sub-components *viz.*, self awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and social skill. The emotional intelligence score ranged from 50 to 250 with an average score of 188. The total score was classified into low (<170), medium (170 - 205) and high (>205) and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 reveals that majority (76.67 %) of the respondents were having medium level of emotional intelligence followed by 13.33 per cent of the respondents having high level of emotional intelligence and 10 per cent were having low level of emotional intelligence.

In Thiruvananthapuram district, 80 per cent of the respondents were having medium

Table 1.

Distribution of Agricultural Officers based on the Level of Emotional Intelligence

Sl. No.	Category	Thiruvanantha-puram (n=30)		Thrissur (n=30)		Kasaragod (n=30)		Total (N=90)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Low (<170)	1	3.33	7	23.33	1	3.33	9	10.00
2.	Medium (170-205)	24	80.00	20	66.67	25	83.33	69	76.67
3.	High (>205)	5	16.67	3	10.00	4	13.33	12	13.33
	Min = 50, Max = 250, Mean = 188.01, SD =17.52								

F - Frequency, % - Percentage

level of emotional intelligence whereas 16.67 per cent of the respondents were having high level of emotional intelligence and 3.33 per cent were having low level of emotional intelligence.

In Thrissur district, 66.67 per cent of the respondents had medium level of emotional intelligence, while 23.33 per cent and 10 per cent of the respondents were having low and high level of emotional intelligence.

Majority of the respondents (83.33 %) were having medium level of emotional intelligence, followed by 13.33 per cent of the respondents having high level of emotional intelligence and only 3.33 per cent were having low level of emotional intelligence in Kasaragod district.

Hence it can be concluded from the results that the scenario of existing status of

emotional intelligence skills of respondents were very good as most of them were in medium to high category. This could be because most of the respondents were under middle age category and they were having more than 10 years of job experience. So these officers can identify and express emotions of self and others. These respondents can manage their emotions well and motivate themselves to do their work very efficiently so that they can manage their work life very well.

The overall emotional intelligence scores and emotional intelligence dimension scores of Agricultural Officers under three districts are presented in Table.2. Kruskal - Wallis test was done to find whether overall emotional intelligence and emotional intelligence dimensions of Agricultural Officers vary among the three districts. It was

Table 2.
Comparison of Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence of Agricultural Officers among the Three Districts

Sl. No.	Components	Thiruvanantha-puram (n=30)	Thrissur (n=30)	Kasaragod (n=30)	KW	Total (N=90)
1.	Self awareness	40.2	38.93	39.87	0.986	39.67
2	Managing emotions	35	33.07	35.2	4.307	34.42
3.	Motivating oneself	36.87	35.87	39.27	8.542*	37.33
4.	Empathy	39.53	38.27	37.83	2.948	38.54
5.	Social skills	40.47	36.17	37.5	9.956**	38.04
	Total	192.07	182.3	189.67	3.949	188.01
X^2-5% (0.05) – 5.99 X^2- 1%(0.01) - 9.21						
* significant at 5 % level ** significant at 1 % level						

KW- Kruskal – Wallis

observed from the table that there was no significant difference in emotional intelligence of Agricultural Officers in three districts, but there was significant difference in the sub-components *viz.*, motivating oneself (8.54) and social skills (9.96). These dimensions vary with regards to region. Motivating oneself was significantly different at five per cent level of significance and social skills was significantly different at one per cent level of significance. The table points to glaring difference in two dimensions *viz.*, 'Social skills' and 'Motivating oneself' as highly significant in terms of its relationship with EI. 'Social skill' was positively significant at 1% significance and the dimension 'Motivating oneself' was significant at 5% significance. This could be attributed to different reasons. In Thrissur district, Agricultural Officers had to deal with *Kole* land farmers who are labour intensive. The production practices in a fragile ecosystem like this demands more effort from the Agricultural Officers in terms of time, space and resource use. This might have influenced their EI and hence the difference among the districts in terms of social skills and motivation.

CONCLUSION

From the study, it can be concluded that there was no significant difference among districts in terms of overall emotional intelligence. However, there was significant difference in the case of dimensions of emotional intelligence viz., motivating oneself and social skills. This might be due to the fact that in Thrissur district, Agricultural Officers have to deal with *Kole* wetland farmers. The production practices in a fragile ecosystem like this demands more effort from the Agricultural Officers in terms of time, space and resource use. This might have influenced their emotional intelligence. The policy makers and the department of agriculture in the state of Kerala need to take note of this and take appropriate action

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