

Attitude of Agricultural Officers towards Training and their Perceived Constraints

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ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken in two zones of Kerala, India. A sample of 90 Agricultural Officers (AOs) was randomly selected and information was gathered and analyzed. A well structured interview schedule was used for data collection. Attitude of the AOs towards training was measured and Garret score ranking method was used to rank the constraints faced by the AOs. The results revealed that majority of the Agricultural Officers had neutral attitude towards training and major constraints faced by AOs were lack of time for extension activities, lack of transport facilities and lack of incentives reward system for better performance.

Keywords: Agricultural Officers; Kerala; Attitude; Training; Mass media contact; Scientific orientation

INTRODUCTION

Lynton and Pareek (2011) defined training as being concerned with on job in-organisation and as aiming not primarily at knowing more but for behaving definitely for lasting improvement on the job. Agricultural Officers (AOs) are the key technical personnel and their efficiency in working depends on their ability and competency backed with technical knowledge, understanding, and skills in agriculture and extension discipline. Due to technical break-throughs in agriculture and

to keep pace with the recent developments, periodical training is mandatory for agricultural officers which is the supreme factor that influences the job effectiveness of the agriculture officers. Hence, it is important to understand the attitude of agricultural officers towards training. An attitude is a predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person or situation. The attitude of the agricultural officers towards training has direct bearing on their efficiency in job performance.

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The agricultural officers working in the Department of Agriculture Development and Farmers welfare face many constraints which ultimately affect their interaction with farmers and various decision making processes. Victor (2019) has pointed out the major constraints faced by the Agricultural Officers working in the Kerala viz., State of excessive workload, lack of promotional opportunities, lack of proper training schedule of the officer, lack of suitability of different schemes and its implementation in different localities and political interference in day to day activity.

Hence, the present study was undertaken with the objective to measure the attitude of AOs towards training and the constraints recognised by them.

METHODOLOGY

The Agricultural Officers working in Kerala State Department of Agriculture in Kannur and Thiruvananthapuram were randomly selected. Totally, 90 Agricultural Officers, of which 45 from Kannur and 45 from Thiruvananthapuram districts were randomly selected using simple random sampling procedure. *Ex-post- facto* research design was used for the study. A well structured interview schedule was prepared after consultation with the experts in extension and other related fields. The scale developed by Kulhari (1980) was used to quantify the attitude score. The scale had 13 statements and the score range was

between 13 and 65. It was measured using five point continuum namely, strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree with weightage of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively for positive statements and reversed for negative statements.

Age, job experience, mass media contact, organisational commitment and scientific orientation were the independent variables selected based on judges rating and relevancy index whereas attitude of agricultural officers towards training was the dependent variable of the study. Correlation analysis was carried out to study the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

With the help of detailed review of literature and discussion with experts, 16 constraints faced by Agricultural Officers were enlisted. The respondents were asked to rank the identified constraints by indicating their response for each constraint on a four point continuum namely, most important, important, least important and not important with weightage of 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. Finally the constraints were ranked using Garret score ranking method.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

It could be observed from Table 1 that in Thiruvananthapuram district, 60 per cent of respondents had neutral attitude towards training whereas, 28.89 per cent and 11.11 per cent of respondents had unfavourable and favourable attitude

towards training respectively. In Kannur district, most (77.78 per cent) of the respondents had neutral attitude followed by 22.22 per cent of the respondents had favourable attitude and no respondents were having unfavourable attitude towards training. Overall data show that, majority (68.89 per cent) of the respondents were having neutral attitude towards training,

while 16.67 per cent had favourable attitude and 14.44 per cent had unfavourable attitude towards training. This might be due to the importance of training for respondents and their direct experience of in-service training programmes which they have attended last two years. The present findings are in line with the findings of Vijaibabu (2005).

Table 1 Distribution of AOs based on their Attitude towards Training

Category	Thiruvananthapuram (n=45)		Kannur (n=45)		Total (N=90)	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Favourable	5	11.11	10	22.22	15	16.67
Neutral	27	60.00	35	77.78	62	68.89
Unfavourable	13	28.89	0	0	13	14.44
Total	45	100	45	100	90	100

F= Frequency

The results of correlation analysis show that (Table 2), mass media contact was significantly and positively correlated with the Attitude of AOs towards training at 5% level of significance. This significant influence of mass media exposure on attitude towards training might be due the fact that the officers who regularly update the information from various channels were very well aware of the advantage of mass media exposure and they develop a favourable attitude towards

training. Scientific orientation of AOs was positively and significantly correlated with the attitude of AOs towards training. Scientific orientation is the degree to which an individual communicator is oriented to the use of scientific methods in decision making in extension communication. It is obvious that officers who were interested in scientific methods must have a desire to update their knowledge through training.

Table 2. Relationship of Selected Characteristics of Agriculture Officers and Attitude of Agricultural Officers towards Training

Sl.No.	Items	Coefficient of Correlation 'r' Value
1.	Age	0.127 NS
2.	Job experience	- 0.050 NS
3.	Mass media contact	0.215*
4.	Organizational commitment	- 0.215*
5.	Scientific orientation	0.222*

*1 Significant at 5% level, 'NS' Non-significant

Table 3 shows the major constraints faced by agricultural officers in Kannur and Thiruvananthapuram districts. Out of several constraints studied, the major constraints identified in the case of Agricultural Officers were, lack of time for extension activities (rank 1), lack of transport facilities (rank 2), lack of incentives and reward system for better performance (rank 3), lack of training in extension communication (rank 4) and lack of promotional opportunities (rank 5).

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents based on Major Constraints

Sl.No	Constraints	Garett score	Rank
1.	Lack of time for extension activities	59.99	1
2.	Lack of transport facilities	44.11	2
3.	Lack of incentives and reward system for better performance	42.83	3
4.	Lack of training in extension communication	40.50	4
5.	Lack of promotional opportunities	40.00	5

CONCLUSION

Based on the results it can be concluded that even though majority of the agricultural officers had a neutral attitude towards training, they expressed their requirement of training in the areas 'Identification of pests and their control in important crops', 'integrated pest control' and 'identification of diseases and their control in important crops'. Hence adequate training need to be given to the agricultural

officers in order to improve their job performance. Lack of time for extension activities, lack of transport facilities, lack of incentives and reward system for better performance, lack of training in extension communication and lack of promotional opportunities were the major constraints faced by the agricultural officers. Hence the policy makers have to design appropriate Hence the policy makers have to design appropriate strategies in order to improve

the job performance of agricultural officers keeping in view of the results of the study.

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