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Constraints Faced by the Extension Personnel of State Agriculture Department

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Abstract: Agricultural development is a precondition of our national prosperity. Role of State Agriculture Department is very important in formulating and implementing the different schemes and policies suitable for development of agriculture in respective states in India. The present study aimed towards exploring constraints faced by extension personnel in strengthening extension system. The study was conducted in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra state including 110 extension personnel of State Agriculture Department. The study revealed that the more than half of extension personnel were facing most severe constraints in input supply, administrative, financial aspects which were inadequate input supply (53.64%), diversified duties and assignments (55.45%), no compensation or incentives for additional work (55.46%), respectively. The other most severe constraints were less chance for promotion and non availability of residential quarters faced by more than half (56.36%) of the respondents. The constraints with medium severity were observed in aspects like Extension and Training aspects, Management aspects, Technical aspects, Communication and human relations and Physiological aspects *viz*; no supply of training literature (46.36%), target oriented approach (50.91%), unavailability of latest agriculture literature (53.64%), inadequate audio- visual aids (52.73%) and high tension due to mental and physical work (39.09%), respectively. The important suggestions obtained from the extension personnel which were pre-seasonal need based training (77.27%), multifarious duties and assignments should be minimized (80.90%), timely availability of advanced technologies (78.18%), supply of critical inputs in required quantity and on time (75.45%), restriction of additional charge (52.72%), monetary incentives for additional work (72.72%) and timely promotions (80.90%) can help to improve their job performance and strengthening extension system.

Key Words: Constraints, Extension personnel, Extension System, State Agriculture Department, Suggestions.

INTRODUCTION

The Agriculture plays a vital role in India's economy and referred as backbone of Indian Economy. Agricultural extension personnel are intermediaries between research and farmers. The adoption of new management and production practices is often the key to maintaining a profitable agricultural operation. The extension personnel play important role in adoption of new management and production practice by the farmers. They act as facilitators and communicators, helping farmers in their decision-making and ensuring that appropriate knowledge and technology is implemented to obtain the best results.

The role of extension personnel of State Agriculture Department is important in agriculture development. In order to perform their role effectively in the transfer of technology, they should take a good effort from their part. As any other job, extension personnel may also face so many problems on their way ahead. Various personal, socio-economic, psychological and communicational factors may become the obstacles in their work which affect performance. So to improve their performance, it is necessary to know about their constraints. Therefore, this study was conducted with attempt to analyze the main constraints faced by the extension personnel and to obtain suggestions for improvement of their role performance, thereby contributing for agriculture development.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra state. Ex-post facto design was used for the study. Sample of 110 extension personnel of State Agriculture Department were selected. The data were collected by personal and well-structured interview schedule.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Constraints Faced by the Extension Personnel of State Agriculture Department and Suggestions given by them

Constraints faced by the extension personnel of State Agriculture Department

In this section, it was tried to find out the constraints faced by the extension personnel of State Agriculture Department while performing their job in the study area. All the possible constraints, faced by the respondents were grouped in to nine major categories viz Extension and Training Constraints, Management Constraints, Technical Constraints, Input supply Constraints, Administrative Constraints, Financial Constraints, Communication and Human relations Constraints, Physiological Constraints and General Constraints. The data regarding Extension and Training Constraints faced by the extension personnel are given in Table 1.

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that among the different 'Extension and Training Constraints', 20.91 per cent and 46.36 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'Non-supply of training literature' as the most important constraints of 'most severe' and 'medium severe' respectively and 26.36 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'Lack of proper training related to job' as the most important constraints of 'least severe.'

The data presented in Table 2 revealed that among the different 'Management Constraints', 28.18 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'More span of control' as the most important constraints of 'most severe', 50.91 per cent respondents were perceived 'Target oriented approach' as the most important constraints of 'medium severe' and 28.18 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'Pressure from the higher officers' as the most important constraints of 'least severe.'

The data presented in Table 3 revealed that among the different 'Technical Constraints', 21.82 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'Lack

Table 1
Extension and Training Constraints faced by the extension personnel

<i>Sl. No. Constraints</i>	<i>Applicability</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Most severe</i>	<i>Medium severe</i>	<i>Least severe</i>
<i>(a) Extension and Training Constraints</i>					
1. Lack of proper training related to job	82 (74.55)	28 (25.45)	14 (12.73)	39 (35.46)	29 (26.36)
2. Insufficient duration of training programme	74 (67.27)	36 (32.73)	18 (16.36)	41 (37.27)	15 (13.64)
3. Non-supply of training literature	86 (78.18)	24 (21.82)	23 (20.91)	51 (46.36)	12 (10.91)
4. Lack of practical skill during training	79 (71.82)	31 (28.18)	16 (14.55)	44 (40.00)	19 (17.27)
5. Insufficient funds for training	72 (65.45)	38 (34.55)	12 (10.91)	47 (42.72)	13 (11.82)
6. Untimely schedule of field visits	84 (76.36)	26 (23.64)	19 (17.27)	49 (44.55)	16 (14.54)
7. Lack of transport facilities for field visits	81 (73.64)	29 (26.36)	20 (18.18)	48 (43.64)	13 (11.82)

Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentages.

Table 2
Management Constraints faced by the extension personnel

<i>Sl. No. Constraints</i>	<i>Applicability</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Most severe</i>	<i>Medium severe</i>	<i>Least severe</i>
<i>(b) Management Constraints</i>					
1. More span of control	94 (85.45)	16 (14.55)	31 (28.18)	54 (49.09)	9 (8.18)
2. Target oriented approach	96 (87.27)	14 (12.73)	30 (27.27)	56 (50.91)	10 (9.09)
3. Non-cooperation from the linked departments	73 (66.36)	37 (33.64)	11 (10.00)	34 (30.91)	28 (25.45)
4. Absence of the contact farmers on the day of visit, coincidence of farm operation with the day of visit	78 (70.91)	32 (29.09)	15 (13.64)	51 (46.36)	12 (10.91)
5. Interfere of the local leaders	89 (80.91)	21 (19.09)	29 (26.36)	43 (39.09)	17 (15.46)
6. Pressure from the higher officers	68 (61.82)	42 (38.18)	10 (9.09)	27 (24.55)	31 (28.18)

Table 3
Technical Constraints faced by the extension personnel

<i>Sl. No. Constraints</i>	<i>Applicability</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Most severe</i>	<i>Medium severe</i>	<i>Least severe</i>
<i>(c) Technical Constraints</i>					
1. Non availability of latest agriculture literature	95 (86.36)	15 (13.64)	17 (15.45)	59 (53.64)	19 (17.27)
2. Lack of information on improved technologies within time	93 (84.55)	17 (15.45)	24 (21.82)	53 (48.18)	16 (14.55)
3. Non-availability of electronic equipments (computer, laptops etc.)	89 (80.91)	21 (19.09)	22 (20.00)	49 (44.55)	18 (16.36)
4. Lack of technical skills to operate various audio visual aids	86 (78.18)	24 (21.82)	21 (19.09)	50 (45.45)	15 (13.64)
5. Lack of internet connection in the office	74 (67.27)	36 (32.73)	16 (14.55)	31 (28.18)	27 (24.54)
6. Lack of computer literacy	69 (62.73)	41 (37.27)	9 (8.18)	34 (30.91)	26 (23.64)

of information on improved technologies within time' as the most important constraints of 'most severe', 53.64 per cent respondents were perceived 'Non availability of latest agriculture literature' as the most important constraints of 'medium severe' and 24.54 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'Lack of internet connection in the office' as the most important constraints of 'least severe.'

The data presented in Table 4 revealed that among the different 'Input Supply Constraints', 53.64 per cent and 8.18 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'Inadequate input supply' as the most important constraints of 'most severe' and 'least severe' respectively and 37.27 per cent respondents were perceived 'Untimely input supply' as the most important constraints of 'medium severe'.

The data presented in Table 5 revealed that among the different 'Administrative Constraints', 55.45 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'Diversified duties and assignments' as the most important constraints of 'most severe', 52.73 per cent respondents were perceived 'Delay in sanction of programme /activities' as the most important constraints of 'medium severe' and 19.09 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'Additional

charge of another village/office' as the most important constraints of 'least severe.'

The data presented in Table 6 revealed that among the different 'Financial Constraints', 55.46 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'No compensation or incentives for additional work' as the most important constraints of 'most severe', 39.09 per cent respondents were perceived 'Inadequate grants for programme/activities' as the most important constraints of 'medium severe' and 36.37 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'Untimely salary' as the most important constraints of 'least severe.'

The data presented in Table 7 revealed that among the different 'Communication and Human relations Constraints', 16.36 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'Lack of response from the farmers' as the most important constraints of 'most severe', 52.73 per cent respondents were perceived 'Inadequate audio-visual aids' as the most important constraints of 'medium severe' and 21.82 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'Unaware about the ICT in agriculture' as the most important constraints of 'least severe'.

Table 4
Input supply Constraints faced by the extension personnel

Sl. No. Constraints	Applicability				
	Yes	No	Most severe	Medium severe	Least severe
<i>(d) Input supply</i>					
1. Untimely input supply	101 (91.82)	9 (8.18)	54 (49.09)	41 (37.27)	6 (5.46)
2. Inadequate input supply	104 (94.55)	6 (5.45)	59 (53.64)	36 (32.73)	9 (8.18)
3. Difficulty in the distribution of inputs to the farmers	88 (80.00)	22 (20.00)	46 (41.82)	38 (34.54)	4 (3.64)
4. Risk in input supply	92 (83.64)	18 (16.36)	57 (51.82)	33 (30.00)	2 (1.82)

Table 5
Administrative Constraints faced by the extension personnel

Sl. No. Constraints	Applicability				
	Yes	No	Most severe	Medium severe	Least severe
<i>(e) Administrative Constraints</i>					
1. Delay in sanction of programme/activities	98 (89.09)	12 (10.91)	27 (24.54)	58 (52.73)	13 (11.82)
2. Large number of vacant posts	74 (67.27)	36 (32.73)	35 (31.82)	32 (29.09)	7 (6.36)
3. Diversified duties and assignments	105 (95.45)	5 (4.55)	61 (55.45)	30 (27.27)	14 (12.73)
4. No separate facility of office	92 (83.64)	18 (16.36)	58 (52.73)	19 (17.27)	15 (13.64)
5. Additional charge of another village/office	94 (85.45)	16 (14.55)	47 (42.73)	26 (23.63)	21 (19.09)

The data presented in Table 8 revealed that among the different 'Physiological Constraints', 39.09 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'More farm and home visits' as the most important constraints of 'most severe', where as 39.09 per cent and 29.09 per cent respondents were perceived 'High tension due to mental and physical work' as the most important constraints of 'medium severe' and 'least severe' respectively.

The data presented in Table 9 revealed that among the different 'General Constraints', 56.36

per cent extension personnel were perceived 'Less chance for promotion' as the most important constraints of 'most severe', 30.91 per cent respondents were perceived 'In natural calamities extra /additional work load which affect the routine work' as the most important constraints of 'medium severe' and 17.27 per cent extension personnel were perceived 'No awards or rewards for good work' as the most important constraints of 'least severe'.

Table 6
Financial Constraints faced by the extension personnel

<i>Sl. No. Constraints</i>	<i>Applicability</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Most severe</i>	<i>Medium severe</i>	<i>Least severe</i>
<i>(f) Financial Constraints</i>					
1. Lack of sufficient pay	64 (58.18)	46 (41.82)	17 (15.45)	19 (17.27)	28 (25.46)
2. Untimely salary	68 (61.82)	42 (38.18)	7 (6.36)	21 (19.09)	40 (36.37)
3. Inadequate grants for programme/activities	96 (87.27)	14 (12.73)	37 (33.64)	43 (39.09)	16 (14.54)
4. Untimely grants for programme/activities	98 (89.09)	12 (10.91)	46 (41.82)	39 (35.45)	13 (11.82)
5. No compensation or incentives for additional work	103 (93.64)	7 (6.36)	61 (55.46)	19 (17.27)	23 (20.91)

Table 7
Communication and Human relations Constraints faced by the extension personnel

<i>Sl. No. Constraints</i>	<i>Applicability</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Most severe</i>	<i>Medium severe</i>	<i>Least severe</i>
<i>(g) Communication and Human relations Constraints</i>					
1. Lack of communication skills	62 (56.36)	48 (43.64)	7 (6.36)	41 (37.27)	14 (12.73)
2. Inadequate audio-visual aids	84 (76.36)	26 (23.64)	15 (13.63)	58 (52.73)	11 (10.00)
3. Unaware about the ICT in agriculture	79 (71.82)	31 (28.18)	13 (11.82)	42 (38.18)	24 (21.82)
4. Lack of response from the farmers	74 (67.27)	36 (32.73)	18 (16.36)	47 (42.73)	9 (8.18)
5. Unable to evaluate the feedback	68 (61.82)	42 (38.18)	12 (10.91)	40 (36.36)	16 (14.55)

Suggestions Given by the Extension Personnel of State Agriculture Department

The data regarding the Suggestions given by the extension personnel of State Agriculture Department for overcoming the constraints faced by them while performing their job given in Table 10.

The data presented in Table 10 revealed that among the different suggestions received from

extension personnel; regarding extension and training, pre-seasonal and need based training should be provided (77.27 per cent), regarding Management aspects, 'multifarious duties and assignments should be minimized' (80.90 per cent), regarding Technical aspects, 'timely availability of advanced technologies' (78.18 per cent) and regarding Input supply, 'Critical inputs should be supplied as per required quantity' (73.63 per cent) were the major suggestions given

Table 8
Physiological constraints faced by the extension personnel

Sl. No.	Constraints	Applicability				
		Yes	No	Most severe	Medium severe	Least severe
(i) <i>Physiological constraints</i>						
1.	High tension due to mental and physical work	95 (86.36)	15 (13.64)	20 (18.18)	43 (39.09)	32 (29.09)
2.	More farm and home visits	87 (79.09)	23 (20.91)	43 (39.09)	34 (30.91)	10 (9.09)
3.	Body pains and illness due to continuous travelling	76 (69.09)	34 (30.91)	24 (21.82)	36 (32.73)	16 (14.54)
4.	Always under tension due to political interference	68 (61.82)	42 (38.18)	21 (19.09)	24 (21.82)	23 (20.91)

Table 9
General constraints faced by the extension personnel

Sl. No.	Constraints	Applicability				
		Yes	No	Most severe	Medium severe	Least severe
(j) <i>General constraints</i>						
1.	Less chance for promotion	106 (96.36)	4 (3.64)	62 (56.36)	29 (26.36)	15 (13.64)
2.	Heavy loads of implementation of various schemes/projects	102 (92.73)	8 (7.27)	59 (53.64)	32 (29.09)	11 (10.00)
3.	More distance from the hometown to the work area	48 (43.64)	62 (56.36)	16 (14.55)	19 (17.27)	13 (11.82)
4.	No awards or rewards for good work	98 (89.09)	12 (10.91)	51 (46.36)	28 (25.46)	19 (17.27)
5.	In natural calamities extra /additional work load which affect the routine work	94 (85.45)	16 (14.55)	48 (43.63)	34 (30.91)	12 (10.91)
6.	Misuse of Right for Information Act (RTI)	90 (81.82)	20 (18.18)	50 (45.46)	22 (20.00)	18 (16.36)
7.	Children's education suffered due to the stay in working area	45 (40.91)	65 (59.09)	12 (10.91)	15 (13.64)	18 (16.36)
8.	Non availability of residential quarters	92 (83.64)	18 (16.36)	62 (56.36)	14 (12.73)	16 (14.55)

by the extension personnel. In case of Administrative aspects, 'restriction of additional charge' (52.72 per cent), regarding financial aspects, 'Monitory incentives should be given for additional work' (72.72 per cent), regarding Communication

and Human relations, 'timely promotion' and regarding Feedback mechanism, 'Solution to the problems should be given in time' (47.27 per cent) were the important suggestions given by the extension personnel.

Table 10
Suggestions given by the extension personnel

<i>Sl. No. Suggestions</i>	<i>Respondents (N = 110)</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>(A) Extension and training</i>		
1. Number of Meetings should be limited	64	58.18
2. Pre-seasonal and need based training should be given	85	77.27
3. Training should be given in extension teaching methods and aids and communication technology	48	43.63
4. Training should be given on advance technologies	83	75.45
5. Extension literature Krishidarshini, Farm magazines, News papers should be supplied free of cost by the Department of Agriculture	44	40.00
<i>(B) Management aspects</i>		
1. Multifarious duties and assignments should be minimized	89	80.90
2. Timely supply of necessary grants and aids at the time of emergency	62	56.36
3. Extension programmes should be allotted before time for proper and efficient planning	46	41.81
4. Adequate stationary should be provided to improve their performance	72	65.45
5. Political interference should be minimized	57	51.81
<i>(C) Technical aspects</i>		
1. Number of schemes should be in optimum number for better implementation	52	47.27
2. Realistic target should be given	65	59.09
3. Timely availability of advanced technologies	86	78.18
4. Office documentary work should be minimized	72	65.45
5. Proper integration of different schemes should be done	74	67.27
<i>(D) Input Supply</i>		
1. Quality inputs should be supplied	62	56.36
2. Critical inputs should be supplied as per required quantity	83	75.45
3. Inputs should be supplied in time	81	73.63
4. Inputs should be supplied according to demand of farmers and recommendations of State Agricultural University	57	51.81
<i>(E) Administrative aspects</i>		
1. The vacant posts should be filled	46	41.81
2. Charge of additional posts should be restricted	58	52.72
3. One agriculture assistant should be adopted for one village	50	45.45
4. Separate office with required facilities should be provided	49	44.54
<i>(F) Financial Aspects</i>		
1. Timely grants should be made available	65	59.09
2. Monetary incentives should be given for additional work	80	72.72

Contd. Table 10

Sl. No. Suggestions	Respondents (N = 110)	
	Number	Percentage
(G) Communication and Human relations		
1. Timely Promotions should be given	89	80.90
2. Recognition as technical grade	74	67.27
3. Sufficient audio visual aids should be supplied	48	43.63
4. A library for should be developed at office for every extensionists	82	74.54
5. Availability of laptop	71	64.54
6. Appropriate evaluation of better work may be done	67	60.90
(H) Feedback mechanism		
1. Solution to the problems should be given in time	52	47.27
2. Involvement of young farmers should be promoted	40	36.36
3. For better feedback high speed internet facility should be made available	49	44.54

CONCLUSIONS

As regards to the specific constraints the extension personnel were faced most severe constraints in Input supply, Administrative aspects, Financial constraints and General constraints. Among these inadequate input supply, diversified duties and assignments, no compensation or incentives for additional work, less chance for promotion and non availability of residential quarters were found as the most severe ones.

Pre-seasonal and need based training should be provided, multifarious duties and assignments should be minimized, timely availability of advanced technologies, supply of critical inputs in time, restriction of additional charge, timely availability grants, timely promotion were the major suggestions given by the Extension Personnel for the improvement of their role performance.

The present study concludes and suggests that the extension personnel were experiencing various constraints to a varying degree and sustainable measures needs to be undertaken by State Agriculture Department based on suggestions made by extension personnel to help them in solving their constraints.

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