

ROLE, WORK LOAD AND TRAINING NEEDS OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION OFFICERS

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Objectives and Method

The main objectives of the study were (1) to investigate the role, workload, and their training needs, and (2) to make recommendations based on a study of their problems.

The venue of the study was the Mahakaushal region of Madhya Pradesh State. The data were collected from 50 Agri. Extension officers (A.E.Os), by mailed questionnaire.

Findings

1. 74 per cent of the A.E.Os. came from rural areas and 50 per cent of them were sons of farmers. They belonged mostly to the age group 25-35 years, and there was no one above 40 years. 42 per cent of them were Agricultural Graduates and the rest mostly matriculates, a few of them having finished their intermediate examinations. Only one A.E.O. had M.Sc. degree in Extension and Rural Sociology. 8 per cent of the A.E.Os obtained direct appointment to this post, the rest were promoted from lower posts.

2. 20 per cent of the blocks had populations ranging from 75,000 to 90,000 while the optimum number should have been 50,000. 34 per cent of the blocks had from 200 to 300 villages each, 48 per cent had from 151 to 200 villages each and 18 per cent had between 100 and 150 each against the prescribed limit of 100 village per block. Again as against the prescribed area of 150-170 square miles for each block, only 10 per cent satisfied this requirement. 44 per cent had between 200 and 300 square miles area, 32 per cent had 300 to 400 square miles, 2 per cent had 400 to 500 square miles and 2 per cent even more than 500 square miles. By and large most of the A.E.Os. felt that their area of operations should

be confined to only about 200 square miles covering about 100 villages.

These factors placed a limit on the A.E.O.'s effectiveness.

3. About 36 per cent of the A.E.Os. had not had any training in Extension and 60 per cent had no chance of attending even the refresher courses.

4. 38.46 per cent of their working time was spent on reports, 15.38 per cent on travelling, 3.8 per cent on supplying seeds and fertilizers and only 36.5 per cent on making contacts with farmers.

5. The problems mentioned by the A.E.Os. can be classified into three categories.

(a) The farmers themselves are slow or unresponsive on account of illiteracy, prejudices against innovations, superstitions, and above all their poverty.

(b) The A.E.Os. complaints : 64 per cent complained that the area of operation was too large, 84 per cent said they had too much of paper work, 76 per cent said the supplies of fertilizers and seeds were not available in time, 36 per cent had complaints about the ill planned programmes, and 52 per cent said that the programmes were unsuccessful largely because of the lack of co-operation and co-ordination among extension workers at the Block level.

(c) Many of the A.E.Os. complained about the dual administration by the B.D.Os. and the District Agricultural Officers and also about the lack of proper guidance. 42 per cent complained of lack of proper storage facilities and 36 per cent of poor communication and transport.

*Bisen J.P., A. Study of Agri Extension Officers in relation to their Training Needs in M.K. Region M.P., M.Sc. Thesis University of Jabalpur 1962.