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Suggestions offered by agricultural officers for improving job performance in Kalaburagi District of Kalyana Karnataka Region

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Abstract

Agricultural Officers play a crucial role in strengthening agricultural extension services through technology dissemination and implementation of developmental programmes. The present study was conducted during 2021–22 in Kalaburagi district of Kalyana Karnataka region to elicit suggestions from Agricultural Officers for improving their job performance. An ex-post facto research design was employed, and data were collected from 60 Agricultural Officers working in 27 Raitha Samparka Kendras using a pre-tested interview schedule. The data were analyzed using frequency and percentage. The findings revealed that 81.66 per cent of the respondents suggested providing vehicle facilities for every Raitha Samparka Kendra, followed by early appointment of village-level service providers (76.66%), recruitment of computer operators and filling vacant posts (68.33% each), establishment of a separate wing for input distribution (61.66%), and reduction of non-departmental work (58.33%). Other important suggestions included minimizing political interference, implementing time-bound promotions, improving internet facilities, supplying audio-visual aids, conducting need-based training, and providing updated agricultural literature. The study concludes that strengthening infrastructure, human resources, administrative support and capacity-building initiatives would substantially improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Agricultural Officers in delivering quality agricultural extension services.

Keywords: Agricultural officers, suggestions, job performance, extension services, Raitha Samparka Kendra, Kalyana Karnataka

Introduction

Agriculture occupies a place of pride in the economic development of the nation and welfare of people. With increases in population, the pressure on agriculture production is also increasing day by day. There is need to increase production and productivity of agriculture crops to feed the growing population. It is also widely recognized fact that transfer of technology from research station to farmer's field is essential for increasing agricultural production. Raitha Samparka Kendras established under Raitha Mithra Yojane during 2000 are the hobli level organization providing agricultural extension services to the farming community at the hobli level. The staffing pattern of RSKs consists of Assistant Agricultural Officers (AAO's) and Agricultural Officer (AO's). Agricultural Officers are extension personnel and the most important technical personnel at the hobli level, who are entrusted with the vital role of inducing the farmers to take up improved agricultural technology to the farming community. Over the years, the responsibilities of Agricultural Officers have expanded considerably due to the implementation of multiple centrally and state-sponsored schemes, climate-related contingencies,

digital reporting systems and increasing expectations from farming communities. Besides extension activities, they are frequently assigned several administrative and non-agricultural duties, which adversely affect their field performance. The implementation of programmes such as the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) has further broadened the scope of responsibilities of extension personnel, demanding greater technical competence, effective coordination and efficient resource management (Kudari *et al.*, 2023)^[5]. Suggestions from frontline extension personnel are valuable for identifying practical measures to improve organizational efficiency and extension effectiveness. Since Agricultural Officers directly interact with farmers and implement agricultural programmes at the grassroots level, their experiences and recommendations provide useful insights for policymakers and administrators to strengthen the public extension system. Incorporating their suggestions into planning and policy decisions can improve institutional support, reduce operational bottlenecks and enhance the quality of extension services. Therefore, the present investigation was undertaken to identify the major constraints faced by Agricultural Officers and obtain their

suggestions for improving job performance in Kalaburagi district of Kalyana Karnataka region.

Methodology

The study was conducted in seven taluks of Kalaburagi district of Kalyana Karnataka region during the year 2021–22. A total of 60 Agricultural Officers working in 27 Raitha Samparka Kendras were selected as respondents. An ex-post facto research design was employed for the investigation. Data were collected using a structured and pre-tested interview schedule designed to elicit suggestions for improving job performance. The respondents were asked to indicate their suggestions based on their field experiences and

organizational requirements. The collected data were classified, tabulated and analyzed using appropriate descriptive statistical tools such as frequency and percentage.

Results and discussion

Suggestions made by Agricultural officers for improving their job performance

The respondents were asked to suggest suitable measures for improving their job performance and enhancing the effectiveness of agricultural extension services. The suggestions offered by the Agricultural officers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Suggestions made by the respondents for improving their job performance n = 60

Sl. No	Suggestions	Frequency	Per cent
1.	Provide vehicle facility for every RSK for field visits and other activities	49	81.66
2.	Need sooner appointments of Anugar / Service provider at each village otherwise it's difficult to implement schemes at base level	46	76.66
3.	Need computer operators / Data entry operators at each RSK apart from accountant since lot of schemes is under online entries	41	68.33
4.	Vacant post should be filled	41	68.33
5.	Need of separate wing for input distribution and staff for input demonstration	37	61.66
6.	Reduce other department work to agriculture department	35	58.33
7.	Political interference should be minimized	31	51.66
8.	Time bound promotions should be strictly follow	31	51.66
9.	Sufficient audio-visuals aids / training materials should be supplied for conduct training	29	48.33
10.	There should be two AAOs at each RSK	26	43.33
11.	Proper internet facilities and computers in working condition must be maintained	26	43.33
12.	Pre seasonal and need based training should be given on latest concepts and technologies	25	41.66
13.	Provide literatures on agriculture technologies	24	40.00
14.	Increase charge allowance with regard to vacant post	18	30.00

The data presented in Table 1 reveal that 81.66 per cent of the Agricultural Officers suggested that every Raitha Samparka Kendra should be provided with a dedicated vehicle for field visits and extension activities. Since regular interaction with farmers, field inspections and technology demonstrations constitute the core responsibilities of Agricultural Officers, adequate transportation is indispensable for efficient extension service delivery. This finding corresponds with the major constraint identified in the present study, where all respondents reported lack of transport facilities as the most severe problem. Similar observations were made by Kshatriya and Deshmukh (2019) ^[3], who reported transport inadequacy as an important organizational constraint affecting extension personnel. Likewise, Gogi Reddy *et al.* (2022) ^[2] emphasized that improved transport facilities would significantly enhance the managerial efficiency of Agricultural Extension Personnel. The second most important suggestion, expressed by 76.66 per cent of the respondents, was the early appointment of Anugars or Service Providers at each village. The respondents indicated that village-level supporting personnel are essential for effective implementation of agricultural development programmes and government schemes. Timely appointment of support staff would reduce the workload of Agricultural Officers and improve programme implementation at the grassroots level. Similar recommendations regarding recruitment of adequate manpower and skilled supporting staff were also reported by Kshatriya *et al.* (2023) ^[4] and Gogi Reddy *et al.* (2022) ^[2]. Nearly 68.33 per cent of the

respondents suggested the appointment of Computer Operators or Data Entry Operators at every Raitha Samparka Kendra, considering the increasing number of online applications, digital reporting systems and scheme management portals. The same proportion (68.33%) also recommended that vacant posts should be filled immediately; indicating that shortage of manpower continues to be a major organizational issue. These findings support those of Kshatriya *et al.* (2023) ^[4], who recommended recruitment of trained staff to reduce workload and improve organizational efficiency. More than three-fifths (61.66%) of the Agricultural Officers suggested the establishment of a separate wing for agricultural input distribution along with dedicated staff for demonstrations. Such an arrangement would enable Agricultural Officers to devote more time to technology dissemination, advisory services and capacity-building programmes instead of routine input management. About 58.33 per cent of the respondents recommended that non-agricultural duties assigned by other departments should be minimized. Agricultural Officers are frequently engaged in election duties, census activities, disaster management and other governmental assignments, which substantially reduce the time available for extension activities. Similar observations were reported by Farooq *et al.* (2010) ^[1] and Kshatriya and Deshmukh (2019) ^[3], who emphasized that excessive non-technical work adversely affects extension effectiveness. An equal proportion (51.66%) of the respondents suggested that political interference should be minimized and time-bound promotions should be

implemented. These suggestions indicate the importance of transparent administration and career advancement in improving employee motivation and organizational commitment. Nearly half (48.33%) of the respondents suggested that adequate audio-visual aids and training materials should be supplied to every Raitha Samparka Kendra for conducting effective farmer training programmes. Similarly, 43.33 per cent recommended the appointment of two Assistant Agricultural Officers at each RSK, while an equal proportion suggested improvement of internet connectivity and maintenance of computers. These recommendations reflect the increasing importance of digital technologies in agricultural extension. Further, 41.66 per cent of the respondents suggested organizing pre-seasonal and need-based training programmes on newly released agricultural technologies. This recommendation supports the findings of the earlier training needs assessment conducted among Agricultural Officers, which emphasized continuous professional development for improving technical competency. Provision of updated literature on agricultural technologies was suggested by 40.00 per cent of the respondents, while 30.00 per cent recommended enhancement of charge allowance for officers handling additional responsibilities due to vacant posts. Overall, the suggestions clearly indicate that Agricultural Officers seek improvements in transport facilities, manpower, digital infrastructure, administrative support, technical capacity building and organizational reforms. Addressing these suggestions would not only improve job performance but also strengthen the efficiency of the public agricultural extension system and facilitate effective dissemination of agricultural technologies among farmers.

Conclusion

The study revealed that Agricultural Officers emphasized the need for improved transport facilities, adequate manpower, better digital infrastructure, reduced non-departmental work, and regular capacity-building programmes to enhance their job performance. The major suggestions included providing vehicles for each Raitha Samparka Kendra, filling vacant posts, appointing support staff, improving internet and computer facilities, and conducting need-based training. Implementing these suggestions would strengthen agricultural extension services, improve technology dissemination and enhance the overall effectiveness of Agricultural Officers in serving the farming community.

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