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Assessing the Job Performance of Women Agriculture Extension Functionaries: An Evidence from Karnataka, India

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of agricultural extension services and the capability of extension personnel to work collaboratively with farmers are vital for fostering positive transformations within the agricultural sector. The efficiency of an extension system depends not just on the number of extension workers but significantly on their performance in fulfilling their responsibilities. With this in

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mind, the current study was conducted to assess the job performance of women agricultural extension functionaries (WAEF) in Shivamogga and Chikkamagalur districts of Karnataka. The present study was conducted in the year 2023-2024 and ex-post facto research design was employed. A total of 120 respondents were interviewed using a questionnaire. Six components were identified to assess job performance. About 78 out of 120 WAEF have medium-level knowledge about building and communication while 25 found high-level. Regarding the evaluation of programs, the majority were at a medium level (78.33%) and overall job performance of the majority of women agriculture extension workers found medium level (70.83%). The study highlights that the most crucial factors for enhancing job performance among women agricultural extension functionaries include providing training, evaluating programs, and developing knowledge and skills. The findings suggest a pressing need to improve the working environment and organizational climate through the implementation of appropriate and efficient HRD (Human Resource Development) practices. Such improvements are expected to significantly boost the effectiveness of extension and advisory services in the region.

Keywords: Job performance; agriculture extension; WAEF; women job performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapidly growing population and expansion of industries in the country continuously demand more food and commercial crops. These circumstances demand that the country should not only strive to fill the gap between demand and supply of food but also ensure an increasing level of nutrition for the growing people of the country. To support the food production increase, the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) has been playing a major role in assisting farmers to improve productivity and increase their income as a means of improving the quality of rural life through the promotion of improved and appropriate farming methods. Under such a situation transfer of technology becomes a challenging job for the DAE in any development programme. The Agriculture Assistants are very important entities, who play as a vital link between research and farm technology transfer for its effective dissemination and ultimate implementation for the agriculture developmental initiatives. Agriculture Assistant working at the grass root level plays a very important role in the process of agriculture development through transfer of farm technology (Siddharth et al., 2023; Gajendra et al., 2025).

Extension is a delivery mechanism across agriculture and allied sectors, in addition to their role in dissemination of conventional knowledge. Meanwhile, the extension landscape has undergone changes, becoming more pluralistic with increasing participation of the private sector (dealing with agro-inputs, agribusiness and financial services), non-governmental organizations (international as well as local); producer groups, cooperatives and associations; consultants (independent and those associated with or employed by agri-business/producer associations) and ICT-based services. All these have brought additional manpower and resources to the Extension and Advisory Service (EAS) along with new knowledge, skills and expertise.

Campbell et al. (1994) emphasizes that family responsibilities have a considerable influence on the job performance of non-professional women, often leading to role conflict and divided attention. Women with heavier family demands were more likely to experience reduced consistency and focus at work, though the effects were not entirely negative. Some participants reported that balancing work and family enhanced their time-management and multitasking abilities, which in turn supported performance. The authors also highlight that the extent of job performance outcomes depended heavily on the availability of family and workplace support systems. Importantly, organizational policies and supervisory understanding were shown to play a vital role in minimizing negative impacts on performance. Thus, the paper concludes that acknowledging and accommodating family responsibilities is essential to maintaining women's effective job performance.

1.1 Objective of the Study

To assess the level of job performance of women agriculture extension functionaries.

2. METHODOLOGY

The present research investigation was confined in the purposively selected Shivamogga and Chikkamagalur districts of Karnataka State. In context to the objectives planned under the study and in view of methodology adopted an '*Ex-post-facto*' of Social Research has been used in the present study. All the talukas of Shivamogga and Chikkamagalur districts were selected. All the women agriculture extension functionaries working in the public and private agricultural fields level of Shivamogga and Chikkamagalur districts i.e. 60 public women agriculture extension functionaries and 60 private women agricultural extension functionaries were selected for the present study. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. The data was collected by personal interview method and was also collected through e-mails by using structured schedule. Researcher collected the data personally and online plot form. Statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage were used for the study.

List 1. List of category and criteria for job performance

Categories	Criteria	Score
Low	Less than (Mean – SD)	Less than 106
Medium	Between (Mean ± SD)	106 to 120
High	More than (Mean + SD)	More than 120

Job performance is operationally defined as "the degree to which a women agriculture extension personnel was regular to perform the job in relation to job chart and was measured in terms of two approaches viz., knowledge building and communicator and extension advisory services. The job performance of respondents has been categorized based on mean and standard deviation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Job performance was measured in terms of 'knowledge building and communicator', Education activities, planning of programmes, Implementation of programmes, Monitoring of programmes and Evaluation of programmes of women agriculture extension functionaries.

I: Knowledge building and communication

Table 1 indicates the knowledge building and communication. Among the statements, presenting results of farm trials in program meeting of every stage and help in finalizing the particular crop varieties for release receives high score (415), followed by 'Help in identifying constraints and training need areas on various aspects of crop production' (414), 'Assisting researchers by providing them feedback in bimonthly workshop and getting early solutions to field problems faced by the farmers' (385) and 'Discuss field problems and finalize crop wise production recommendation with scientists in program meetings' received low score (384). The reason might be that, importance needs to be given towards conducting more meetings with the farmers to give them chance to discuss their issues and views regarding their field related matters. The staff also need to be more efficient towards helping the rural youths to be able to create their own stable and reliable enterprises by developing their skills and give technical guidance through proper trainings (Patel *et al*. 2016).

II: Education activities

As in depicted Table 2 second indicator was name as education activates in the extension and advisory services and consists of six statements. Among the statements, communicating solutions to farmers on field problems receives highest score (503), followed by 'Contacting farmers on their farm and homes for transfer of technology' (479), 'Conducting need based training programmes to farmers' (467), 'Conducting group meetings for farmers' (404) and 'I prepare audio-visual aids such as (charts, graphs, and puppet shows) for teaching and learning' received relatively low score (393). The reason might be that, Importance needs to be given towards conducting more meetings with the farmers to give them chance to discuss their issues and views regarding their field related matters. The staff also need to be more efficient towards helping the rural youths to be able to create their own stable and reliable enterprises by developing their skills and give technical guidance through proper trainings Panda, A. (2022).

III: Planning of programmes

Results of the Table 3 indicates that, WAEF engaged in planning for preparation of relevant information material received highest score (498), followed by 'Studying local situation and identifying problems' (479), 'Engage various social and marginalized groups in extension programs' (464), 'Suggesting ideas to Scientists for future research' (431) and 'Electing farmers

and farms for conducting trails' received low score (390). This may be due to a lack of experience, insufficient interaction with scientists or limited resources for selecting farms. Addressing these gaps can enhance staff contributions to research and trial planning, improving overall program effectiveness Nemanwar,(2023).

IV: Implementation of programmes

The fourth indicator (table 4) implementation of programmes consist of four statements and the statement, 'Be able to engage women farmers and members of minority groups in extension work' recorded highest score (512), followed by 'Engage local stakeholders in implementing extension program activities' (499), 'Follow participatory decision making model in extension work' (480) and 'Coordinate extension programs and activities within your jurisdiction' received low score (445) in the indicator implementation of programmes. These lower scores may be due to difficulties in coordination and integration within the jurisdiction. Improving these areas could enhance overall effectiveness and ensure better implementation of extension activities Gupta. (2022).

V: Monitoring of programmes

Results depicted (Table 5) reviled that, the fifth indicator consist of sixth statement and the statement distributing subsidized inputs to farmers' (516), followed by 'Arranging inputs for trails in farmers field' highest score (512), 'Guiding farmers on obtaining farm credit' (498), 'Distributing high yielding variety seed to farmers' (493), 'Supplying printed extension literature to farmers' (458) and 'Engaging local development agencies such as NGOs, SHGs, cooperatives & farmer associations in various extension programmes' received lowest score (456). These gaps could be due to challenges in tracking distribution processes and integrating local agencies into extension programs. Improving monitoring practices could enhance the overall effectiveness of these support and engagement activities (Purnima,.*et al* 2018).

VI: Evaluation of programmes

It is quite clear from Table 6 that, last indicator evaluation of programmer consist of five statements and the statement evaluating success of the group meetings, exhibition etc accounted for highest score (490), followed by 'Ascertaining the success of field days' (489), 'Conduct monitoring and evaluation of extension programs' (487). 'Develop data collection instruments for monitoring and evaluation of extension works' (480) and 'Evaluating the efficiency of other field level extension personnel in implementing extension activities' recorded low score (476). The reason might be that, education and planning there is still

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to Knowledge building and communication

Sl. No.	Statements	Total score	Per cent
1	Assisting researchers by providing them feedback in bimonthly workshop and Getting early solutions to field problems faced by the farmers.	385	77.00
2	Help in identifying constraints and training need areas on various aspects of crop production.	414	82.80
3	Discuss field problems and finalize crop wise production recommendation with scientists in program meetings	384	76.80
4	Presenting results of farm trials in program meeting of every stage and help in finalizing the particular crop varieties for release	415	83.00

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to Educational activities

Sl. No.	Statements	Total score	Per cent
1	Conducting group meetings for farmers	404	67.33
2	Demonstrating skills to farmers	438	73.00
3	Communicating solutions to farmers on field problems	503	83.33
4	Conducting need based training programmes to farmers	467	77.83
5	Contacting farmers on their farm and homes for transfer of technology	479	79.83
6	I prepare audio-visual aids such as (charts, graphs and puppet shows) for teaching and learning	393	65.50

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to Planning of programmes

Sl. No.	Statements	Total score	Per cent
1	Planning for preparation of relevant information material	498	83.00
2	Electing farmers and farms for conducting trails	390	65.00
3	Studying local situation and identifying problems	479	79.83
4	Suggesting ideas to Scientists for future research	431	71.83
5	Engage various social and marginalized groups in extension programs	464	77.33

Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to Implementation of programmes

Sl. No.	Statements	Total score	Per cent
1	Coordinate extension programs and activities within your jurisdiction	445	74.17
2	Engage local stakeholders in implementing extension program activities	499	83.17
3	Follow participatory decision making model in extension work	480	80.00
4	Be able to engage women farmers and members of minority groups in extension work	512	85.33

Table 5. Distribution of respondents according to Monitoring of programmes

Sl. No.	Statements	Total score	Per cent
1	Guiding farmers on obtaining farm credit	498	83.00
2	Distributing subsidized inputs to farmers	516	86.00
3	Distributing high yielding variety seed to farmers	493	82.17
4	Supplying printed extension literature to farmers	458	76.33
5	Arranging inputs for trails in farmers field	512	85.33
6	Engaging local development agencies such as NGOs, SHGs, cooperatives & farmer associations in various extension programmes	456	76.00

Table 6. Distribution of respondents according to Evaluation of programmes

Sl. No.	Statements	Total score	Per cent
1	Evaluating success of the group meetings , exhibition etc.	490	81.67
2	Ascertaining the success of field days	489	81.50
3	Evaluating the efficiency of other field level extension personnel in implementing extension activities	476	79.33
4	Conduct monitoring and evaluation of extension programs	487	81.17
5	Develop data collection instruments for monitoring and evaluation of extension works	480	80.00

Table 7. Distribution of respondents according to Overall Job performance

Sl. No	Category	Criteria	Frequency	Per cent
1	Low(Mean - SD)	Less than 106.00	17	14.17
2	Medium(Mean ± SD)	106.00 to 120.00	85	70.83
3	High (Mean + SD)	More than 120.00	18	15.00
Mean = 113.20			SD = 7.51	

scope of improvement. Emphasis needs to be given in supply and service arena in capacity building of the staff as well as making necessary arrangement for provision of inputs, facilities and linkage (Madhavrao. 2020).

3.1 Overall Job Performance of Women Agriculture Extension Functionaries

Results depicted in Table 7 reveals that, majority (70.83 %) of the WAEF were found to in medium job performance, followed by high level (15.00 %) and low level (14.17 %) of job performance variable. The majority of women agriculture extension personnel, according to the results, performed at a medium level on the job, which is primarily attributed to their assisting researchers by providing them feedback in bimonthly workshop and getting early solutions to field problems faced by the farmers, taking help, guidance and discussion with the researchers and scientists. Whereas a lot of improvement, as seen by these types of findings, which may be caused by factors like a heavy workload, lack of coworker cooperation and variations in working conditions from one location to another Kumar and Kaur (2016).

Table 8. Distribution of respondents according to factors influencing job performance

Independent variables	p-value
Age	11.327*
Education qualification	9.632*
Experience in extension work	19.303**
Accountability to clientele	13.420**
Self-reliance	9.522*
Achievement motivation	15.494**
Work load	12.976*
Organization climate	15.742**
Organization communication	12.451*
Facilities and resources	10.062*
Extension contact	10.827**
Trainings attended	11.888*

**: Significant at 0.05 level of probability, **: Significant at 0.01 level of probability*

3.2 Factors Influencing Job Performance of Women Agriculture Extension Functionaries

This section deals with the kind of factors influencing of twelve independent variables with that of one dependent variable i.e. job performance of women agriculture extension functionaries. In order to study the association between the dependent and independent variables. The chi-square test was used to find out the influencing between profile characteristics and performance of women agriculture extension functionaries.

It was evident form Table 8 revealed that, out of 12 independent variables of respondents, five variables namely experience in extension work, accountability clientele, achievement motivation, organization climate and extension contact were found to have highly significant influence at 1.00 per cent level of significance with the job performance of women agriculture extension functionaries. While, variables such as age, educational qualifications, self-reliance, work load, organizational communication, trainings attended and facilities-resources had significant influence at 5.00 per cent level of significance with job performance of women agriculture extension functionaries (Inez and Yohana 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

Women agriculture extension functionaries play a crucial role in promoting the increasing involvement of women in agriculture, addressing the gender productivity gap, and ensuring rural women have equal access to extension advisory services. Furthermore, the performance level of these women agriculture extension functionaries significantly impacts the overall effectiveness of agricultural advisory services.

In a similar context, the present study revealed that in their job performance of Women Agriculture Extension Functionaries reveals that the majority (70.83%) operate at a medium performance level, followed by high level (15.00%) performance and (14.17%) at a low level. These findings indicate that while most WAEF are performing adequately, there remains room for improvement, particularly in elevating those in the medium and low performance categories. For future improvement, targeted interventions such as capacity-building programs, advanced training in communication, program planning and evaluation could be beneficial.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of this manuscript.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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