

Communication Behaviour of the Agricultural Extension Officers Working in Rural Development Blocks of Tamil Nadu

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An analysis of the communication behaviour of the Agrl. extension workers revealed the following. The Agricultural Extension Officers were very poor in their output behaviour due to pre-occupation in their administrative and organization work in the office. Therefore facilities should be provided to relieve them from more of administration work and concentrate on other areas like educating the farmers, supervising and guiding the Village Level Extension Workers and farmers in the field. The administrators should provide more opportunities for the Agricultural Extension Officers to arrange special lectures, participating in radio broadcast and encouraging to write more of written information materials to the farming community. The information unit may be strengthened further to screen film shows and slide shows during evenings in the villages.

Communication behaviour of extension personnel has important role in bringing about social change in India (Kivlin *et al.* 1968, Singh and Sahay (1976). An Agricultural Extension officer has special message to communicate to rural people and farmers. He has to maintain communication with other extension workers, social workers, scientists and administrators in order to co-ordinate the extension work effectively. With this in view, the present study was designed to know the overall communication behaviour, the trends, the inter-relationship, the most and the least used communication behaviour and also the effect of communication behaviour on job performance of Agricultural Extension Officers. This study was conducted with 127 Agricultural Extension Officers and their 104 superior officers consisting of 92 Block Development Officers and 12 District Agricultural

Officers, selected from Coimbatore, Madurai and Tirunelveli districts of Tamil Nadu. Two sets of data were utilized. The data pertaining to the communication behaviour of Agricultural Extension Officers, were gathered using the communication behaviour questionnaire developed by Akhouri (1973) and obtained from their superior Officers through rating job performance items.

Communication behaviour of Agricultural Extension Officers specifically included three aspects, namely, input behaviour (Reading farm research magazines, listening farm radio broadcast etc.) processing behaviour (evaluating research recommendations, preparing charts etc.) and output behaviour (farm and home visit, sending circular letters etc.). The communication behaviour questionnaire consisted of 34 items accounting for an

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overall communication behaviour score of 806.

A self prepared job performance chart consisting 65 items with six job areas, namely, education, supply and service, administration and organization, supervision, planning, and evaluation was utilized. The maximum score for each item was 5 based on a five point continuum. Since the number of items between the communication behaviour questionnaire and job performance chart were different, the corresponding scores were converted into percentage scores, for analysis. Communication behaviour of the Agricultural Officers was analysed in terms of the overall behaviour as well as in specific aspects, namely, input behaviour, processing behaviour and output behaviour, whose mean and standard deviation values are given in table.1.

The overall mean communication behaviour score of the Agricultural Extension Officers was 24.3. The communication behaviour of the 127 Agricultural Extension Officers in different components also differed. The significance of the above trends was tested by F-test. Agricultural Extension Officers differed significantly in their communication behaviour in respect of input behaviour, processing behaviour and output behaviour.

The significant F-value, though indicative of overall significant trend of difference between the three aspects of communication behaviour, does not give clarification with regard to the significance of the mean differen-

ces in communication behaviour scores in respect of the three comparisons of the different aspects of the communication behaviour. Therefore, critical difference values were computed for 0.05 and 0.01 levels for testing their significance. The critical difference values were 3.45 and 4.57 at 0.05 and 0.01 levels respectively.

The significant difference between the mean values of the three comparisons showed that the Agricultural Extension Officers mean communication behaviour score on the three aspects differed significantly from each other in all the comparisons. As such the mean communication behaviour score in respect of processing behaviour was the highest, followed by the mean input behaviour score and mean output behaviour score. This means, Communication behaviour was best with regard to processing of the Agricultural information such as, preparing charts, graphs models for educating the farmers. However, their activity of collecting agricultural information from different information sources was inferior to the processing behaviour. Surprisingly they were very poor in extending the agricultural information to farmers. Shete (1974) reported that the Agricultural Extension Officers working in Maharashtra State were doing best in information processing behaviour amongst the three aspects.

In order to further analyse the association between the scores of the different aspects of communication behaviour correlation co-efficient values were computed.

The correlation co-efficient values were positive and significant between all the three aspects. This means, that an Agricultural Extension Officer whose communication behaviour was good or bad in one aspect, was correspondingly good or bad in other aspects of communication behaviour. This trend of result is supported by the findings of Akhouri (1978) and Shete (1974).

In order to know the various aspects of communication behaviour, the scores obtained on each of the 34 items were transformed into T.scores. For convenience, the five ranks from the top and also from the bottom are taken for discussion. According to this the Agricultural Extension Officers were very good in their communication behaviour regarding 1) farmers call, for discussing field problems and advice, 2) farm and home visits, 3) addressing meetings for dissemination, 4) receiving extension publications and magazines and 5) conducting field day and field trips. However, their communication behaviour was rather poor regarding 1) attending special lectures, 2) listening farm radio broadcast, 3) participation in radio broadcast 4) writing to farm families and 5) arranging film and slide shows. Thus, the Agricultural Extension Officers' communication behaviour was observed to be poor in the above aspects. The correlation co-efficient between job

performance and communication behaviour 0.7815, which was positive and significant indicating that those Agricultural Extension Officers who scored high or low in communication behaviour were correspondingly high or low in their job performance. In other words, the communication behaviour of the Agrl. Extension Officers was more closely associated with their performance. Kolte (1972) in his study on Agricultural Extension Officers found that there was positive correlation between communication behaviour and job performance.

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Table : 1 Means and Standard Deviations of Communication Behaviour Scores

Scores in	mean	S. D.
Overall communication behaviour	24.3	10.7
Input behaviour	27.6	12.3
Processing behaviour	37.6	17.0
Output behaviour	23.7	12.2