



PROFILE CHARACTERISTICS OF VILLAGE AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANTS (VAAs) OF RYTHU BHAROSA KENDRAS (RBKs) IN KURNOOL DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

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The present study was conducted on the profile characteristics of Village Agricultural Assistants (VAAs) of RBKs in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. A total of 110 respondents were randomly selected and interviewed. The results of the study indicated that the respondents were in young age (<35 years) group (82.73%) with Under Graduation (4 and 5 years) (43.64%) and diploma (36.36%), had medium organizational climate (65.45%), communication skills (56.36%), job performance (72.73%), training undergone (58.18%), information seeking behaviour (49.09%), job involvement (46.36%), perceived work load (60.00%) and job satisfaction (65.45%).

KEYWORDS: Profile characteristics, Village Agricultural Assistants, perceived work load.

INTRODUCTION

Andhra Pradesh is a state primarily based on agriculture. The new Andhra Pradesh government has pledged to do everything it takes to ensure the welfare of farmers. It is crucial to create a platform at the village level where government services can be enhanced both qualitatively and quantitatively. A solid integrated platform is required to efficiently provide advisory services and cater the needs of every farmer.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh established 10,641 Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) on 30th May 2020 with an expenditure of 200 crores in all Gram panchayats. The RBK services include Agri Input Shop with an objective to make available quality inputs at right price and right time at villages backed by integrated advisory through Farmer Knowledge Centre which is a training centre. The functionaries of RBKs include Village Agricultural Assistants/Village Horticultural Assistants/Sericulture Assistants, Village Animal Husbandry Assistants/Village Fisheries Assistants in the respective RBKs.

At present, State Department of Agriculture, Andhra Pradesh is implementing various programs like Polambadi, National Seed Project (NSP) and others for the benefit of the farmers. The success of these programs depends on how well they are planned, implemented and reached into the hands of the farmers. The extension personnel like VAAs who are working closely with and for the farmers have a great responsibility on them for

achieving the good results. It not only depends on number of VAAs but also their socio-economic attributes.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Ex post facto research design was followed for conducting the study. This design was appropriate because the phenomenon has already occurred. Kerlinger (1973) defined *Ex post facto* research design as any systematic empirical enquiry in which the independent variables have not been directly manipulated because they have already occurred or they are inherently not manipulable. He further stated that *Ex post facto* studies can be devised to deduce theories, identify behavioural phenomenon and explore conditions under which a phenomenon occurs.

Andhra Pradesh state was selected purposively for the study as the researcher hails from the same state and is familiar with the local language. Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh was selected purposively for the study as the researcher hails from the same district. Out of 11 Agricultural Divisions, one mandal from each division namely Adoni, Chagalmari, Aspari, Pamulpadu, Peapully, Owk, Kurnool, Orvakal, Banganapalli, Devanakonda and Yemmiganur with a maximum number of RBKs were selected purposively. Ten villages were selected from each mandal by simple random sampling procedure making a total of 110 villages. All the Village Agricultural Assistants of RBKs of 110 villages will be selected purposively making a total of 110 respondents.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected during the study were analyzed and the results were presented in Table 1.

Age

It could be observed from Table 1 that majority of the respondents (82.73%) belonged to young age (<35 years) category followed by middle (36-55 years) (17.27%) age. The major reason for this trend might be that RBKs were newly started by state government and the VAAs were mass recruited and the qualification for appointing VAAs is Diploma/B.Sc/M.Sc/Ph.D. The findings were in accordance with the Murai (2017), Deepti (2019), Davidson (2021).

Education

It could be observed from Table 1 that majority of the respondents (43.64%) belong to undergraduate (4 and 5 years) followed by Diploma (36.36%), Post Graduate and above (10.91%) and Under Graduation (3 years) (9.09%). The major reason for this trend might be that educational qualification for the post of VAA was from Diploma to Ph.D. It may be inferred that most of them entered the service after Under Graduation (4 and 5 years) and Diploma.

Organizational Climate

It is apparent from Table 1 that majority of the respondents (65.45%) perceived to be under medium organizational climate followed by 18.18 per cent under low organizational climate and 16.36 per cent under high organizational climate. The major reason for this trend might be due to the fewer chances for taking independent decisions by the VAAs as well as the work pressure to accomplish assigned task within deadlines. Another factor could be that lack of recognition for good work and feedback on performance.

Communication skills

It is noticed from Table 1 that majority of the respondents (56.36%) possessed medium level of communication skills followed by 30.91 per cent possessed high level of communication skills and 12.73 per cent possessed low level of communication skills. The major reason for this trend was that because VAAs were posted to their proximity areas which help them to communicate well with the farmers and provide services to them. The VAAs spoke in an understandable way,

provided information on time which helped them to sustain interest all through the work. This result confirms the findings of Talukdar (1984), Shinde *et al.* (1997), Gurav (2006) Thorat (2008) and Hanif (2015).

Job performance

It is implied from Table 1 that majority of the respondents (72.73%) had medium level of job performance followed by 18.18 per cent of the respondents had high level of job performance and 9.09 per cent of the respondents had low level of job performance. The major reason for this trend was due to their level of understanding about their duties and responsibilities and their acquaintance with the activities to be done according to needs of the farmers. It may be inferred that majority of the VAAs were engaged in the activities attached to their position to a good extent. This result confirms the findings of Madhavan (2015), Padmakumar and Annasaheb (2016), Deotale (2017).

Training undergone

It is apparent from Table 1 that majority of the respondents (58.18 %) had medium level of training followed by 29.09 per cent of the respondents had high level of training and 12.73 per cent had low level of training. The major reason for this trend was that VAAs were having trainings as per the needs based on their local conditions and occasionally few VAAs were sent to mandal level office for trainings. This result confirms the findings of Senchowa (2017), Bortamuly and Das (2018).

Information seeking behaviour

It is observed from Table 1 that nearly half of the respondents (49.09%) had medium information seeking behaviour followed by 30.00 per cent had high information seeking behaviour and 20.90 per cent had low information seeking behaviour. The major reason for this trend was because most of the VAAs hold degree and diploma and were well aware of the sources of information which enable them to use the information sources like newspaper, magazines, mobile phone, internet etc., This result confirms the findings of Jeeva *et al.* (2013), Madhavan (2015) and Padmakumar *et al.* (2017).

Job involvement

It is noticed from Table 1 that nearly half of the respondents (46.36%) had medium level of job

Table 1. Profile characteristics of Village Agricultural Assistants**(n = 110)**

| S. No. | Category | Class Interval | Frequency (f) | Percentage (p) | Mean | S.D |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|------------|
| I. | Age | | | | | |
| 1. | Young age | (<35 years) | 91 | 82.73 | | |
| 2. | Middle age | (36-55 years) | 19 | 17.27 | - | - |
| 3. | Old age | (>56 years) | 0 | 0.00 | | |
| II. | Education | | | | | |
| 1. | Diploma | | 40 | 36.36 | | |
| 2. | Undergraduate (3 years) | | 10 | 9.09 | | |
| 3. | Undergraduate (4 and 5 years) | | 48 | 43.64 | - | - |
| 4. | Post Graduate and above | | 12 | 10.91 | | |
| III. | Organizational climate | | | | | |
| 1. | Low | | 20 | 18.18 | | |
| 2. | Medium | | 72 | 65.45 | 73.3 | 7.07 |
| 3. | High | | 18 | 16.36 | | |
| IV. | Communication skills | | | | | |
| 1. | Low | | 14 | 12.73 | | |
| 2. | Medium | | 62 | 56.36 | 10.44 | 1.01 |
| 3. | High | | 24 | 30.91 | | |
| V. | Job performance | | | | | |
| 1. | Low | | 10 | 9.09 | | |
| 2. | Medium | | 80 | 72.73 | 52.30 | 5.35 |
| 3. | High | | 20 | 18.18 | | |
| VI. | Training undergone | | | | | |
| 1. | Low | | 14 | 12.73 | | |
| 2. | Medium | | 64 | 58.18 | 10.71 | 1.4 |
| 3. | High | | 32 | 29.09 | | |
| VII. | Information seeking behaviour | | | | | |
| 1. | Low | | 23 | 20.90 | | |
| 2. | Medium | | 54 | 49.09 | 29.48 | 3.06 |
| 3. | High | | 33 | 30.00 | | |
| VIII. | Job involvement | | | | | |
| 1. | Low | | 20 | 18.18 | | |
| 2. | Medium | | 51 | 46.36 | 26.61 | 2.13 |
| 3. | High | | 39 | 35.45 | | |
| IX. | Perceived workload | | | | | |
| 1. | Low | | 10 | 9.09 | | |
| 2. | Medium | | 66 | 60.00 | 15.59 | 1.82 |
| 3. | High | | 34 | 30.90 | | |
| X. | Job satisfaction | | | | | |
| 1. | Low | | 14 | 12.73 | | |
| 2. | Medium | | 72 | 65.45 | 26.81 | 2.40 |
| 3. | High | | 24 | 21.82 | | |

involvement followed by 35.45 per cent had high level of job involvement and 18.18 per cent had low level of job involvement. The major reason for this trend was due to their sincerity interest and dedication to serve the farming community. It can be inferred that the VAAs who had medium to high involvement were more contended with work, work environment and had a desire for excellence and favourable feelings towards the system in which he works. This result confirms the findings Kulkarni (2001), Ahire (2005), Bhople *et al.* (2000), Singh *et al.* (2011), Mishra *et al.* (2011), Potawade (2012), Hanif (2015) and Dhananjay (2016).

Perceived work load

It is evident from Table 1 that majority of the respondents (60.00 %) perceived their workload under medium followed by 30.90 per cent perceived their work load under high and 9.09 per cent perceived their work load as low. The major reason for this trend was that assigning more number of villages under the VAAs and overburden of work. A single VAA need to take care of all the farmers under his jurisdiction and the VAAs were not superiors they need to perform different roles. This result confirms the findings of Gopika (2014).

Job satisfaction

It is implied from Table 1 that majority of the respondents (65.45%) had medium level of job satisfaction followed by 21.82 per cent had high level of job satisfaction and 12.73 had low level of job satisfaction. The major reason for this trend might be due to the fact that the job security as they have less opportunity to enter into government sector and most of the VAAs entered the post immediately after their education coupled with interesting nature of job, working relationship with colleagues and high job performance. The findings are in accordance with Madhavan (2015), Dhananjay (2016), Obabire *et al.* (2019), Manobharathi *et al.* (2020) and Davidson *et al.* (2021).

The profile of the Village Agricultural Assistants plays an immense role in the effective functioning of RBKs. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents were in young age (<35 years) group with Under Graduation (4 and 5 years) and diploma had medium organizational climate, communication skills, job performance, training undergone, information seeking behaviour, job involvement, perceived work load and job satisfaction. This study will help the administrators to strengthen the role of VAAs in effective implementation of RBKs.

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