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PROBLEM CONFRONTATION OF THE FEMALE AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION OFFICERS OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION IN BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

Nurani NS, Bhuiyan MH, Ulla MS, Azad MJ, Bagum T (2015) Problem confrontation of the female agricultural extension officers of department of agricultural extension in Bangladesh. *J. Innov. Dev. Strategy*. 9(1), 13-16.

The purpose of the study was to determine and describe problem confrontation of the Female Agricultural Extension Officers (FAEOs) of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE). As the number of the FAEOs is not much (total 150 for the whole country) all the FAEOs working under different Upazillas were considered as the sample of this study. A structured questionnaire was prepared for collecting data from the FAEOs and it was pretested among ten FAEOs at DAE Head Quarter. Then the corrected questionnaires were mailed to the addresses of 150 FAEOs in August 2012 and requested to return back within 30 August 2012. Out of which 65 duly filled up questionnaires were returned back to the researcher in time. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was chosen as data analysis method. The study revealed that majority of the respondents (84.62 percent) had enough problem confrontation capacity ranged from medium (50.77 percent) to high (33.85 percent). Only 15.38 percent had low problem confrontation capacity. From the Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis it was found that among nine independent variables motivation and personality had significant relationship. The rest of the variables like professional commitment, age, job performance, technological knowledge and personality did not show any significant relationship.

Key words: Female Agricultural Extension Officers (FAEOs), problem confrontation, DAE

INTRODUCTION

Women are the modest in nature and caring about interpersonal relationship and quality of life in masculine society. So women are the inseparable part of the development of any country. Nearly half of the population of a country is women (Tasnim and Shamima, 2006). Which indicates development of the country could not be ensured without ensuring women's development. Now a days for transfer of agricultural technology women play a significant role. The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) had been emerged mainly for transfer of agricultural technology among farmers with a package program of information, education, and motivation (Bhuiyan 1999). At present DAE has approximately 2087 extension employees, among them 1937 are male extension officers and only 150 are female extension officers (BCS Association Selection, 2012-2013). Compared to male agricultural extension officers the number of female agricultural extension officers is negligible. The working situation is a bit different for them compared to their male counterpart. They face many problems in performing their job activities. A problem always has to do with dissatisfaction about a certain situation. A perceived gap between the existing state and a desired state, or a deviation from a norm, standard or status quo is called problem. According to Evans (1998) five significant factors regarding to superior supervision which affects subordinates job satisfaction; personality, interpersonal behavior, mission, professionalism and management skill. Bhatangar (1971) undertook a research on the Field Level Extension Workers in Madhya Pradesh in India. The research indentified some important problems faced by Field Level Extension Workers in performing their role. The problem included: lack of incentive recognition to the field workers, inadequacy of field and farmers problem oriented researches, lack of resources, inputs and motivation among farmers, lack of transport facilities and inter personal relationships and lack of leadership and training facilities. Sometimes female officers found dogmatic attitude of them. For that female officers are unlikely contradict with their bosses directly. They have no recognition for their good job performance. FAEOs respondents to handle the problems faced during their job performance. Some issues of job environment may be pleasant for Male Agricultural Extension Officers, which may not be better for the opposite partner. But the organization ignores the attitudes of the extension officer. Organizational achievement is largely depends upon how much the employees are satisfied with their job condition. Development and management of DAE need information on job satisfaction of female extension officers in order to make sound decision, for solving their problem. Every organization gives many facilities for their employees. Although government has given many facilities, still Female Agricultural Extension Officers face many problems that hinder job performance. Some problems such as field problems, materials problems, farmer's functional literacy problems etc. they solve by themselves. But some organizational problems are not solved. Now the question arises which type of problems female extension officers is faced and how much capacity of them to solve those problems. Posting or placement is a great problem for female officers. Extension officer's transfer after every three years. Frequent transfer also hampers their career development. When one become familiar at a new place they are transferred to others. For this reason they cannot perform their job properly. Sometimes they go abroad for field work, but their T.A. is negligible. Their promotion facilities are not so good. Again, high power distance between the bosses and female officers also creates problems. Considering the above facts the researcher became interested

to carry out the present study on “Problem Confrontation of the Female Agricultural Extension Officers of Department of Agricultural Extension in Bangladesh” with the following specific objectives:

- To determine and describe the problem confrontation of the Female Agricultural Extension Officers; (FAEOs) of DAE;
- To determine and describe some selected characteristics of FAEOs;
- To explore the relationship of the selected characteristics of FAEOs with their problem confrontation.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted from 7 august 2012 to 30 august 2012. As the number of FAEOs are not much which is 150, all of these FAEOs were used for data collection. For data collection a mailed questionnaire was sent to each FAEO through courier service. Out of 150 only 65 (43%) duly filled up questionnaire reached to the researcher’s address. So the sample size of the population became 65. Professional commitment, age, job performance, technological knowledge, motivation, supervision, personality, training, and initiatives of a farmer’s problem were as independent variables. Problem confrontation of the female agricultural extension officers was considered as the dependent variable. Age of an FAEO was measured as the period from her date of birth to the time of filling up the mailed questionnaire and it was expressed in complete years. Professional commitment, job performance, technological knowledge, motivation, supervision, personality and initiativeness of addressing farmer’s problem were measured by asking response towards their respective variable related statements, against which scores were assigned according to the degree of that respective variables. Training was measured by the total number of days a respondent received training on different subject matters in her entire service life. Problem confrontation was measured by asking questions consisting of job related problems, against which score were assigned according to the degree of problem confronted. The scales for measuring problem confrontation, 10 aspects of problems were selected based on job description of FAEOs. The problems were frequent transfer, minimum or fixed transport allowance, lengthy promotion, lack of technological experiment, complexity of field problem, insufficient demonstration materials, farmers’ functional literacy problem, get no help from the bosses, no recognition for good work and no career development facilities. The FAEOs were asked to indicate their opinion against these problems. To compute problem confrontation score, a 4-point rating scale was used. Scores were assigned as 4, 3, 2, and 1 against highly satisfaction, medium satisfaction, low satisfaction and very low satisfaction respectively. Data from the interview schedule were coded, compiled, tabulated and analyzed in accordance with the objectives of the study. The analysis was performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) computer package. Null hypothesis were formulated to test the relationship of independent variables with dependent variable as “there is no relationship between the problem confrontation of the FAEOs of DAE and each of the independent variables of the study”. Descriptive analysis such as range, number, percentage distribution, mean and standard deviation were used whenever necessary. Pearson Product Moment correlation was used in order to explore the relationship between the concerned variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem confrontation of FAEOs

The salient features of problem confrontation of the FAEOs’ of the DAE have been presented in the Table 1. The observed scores of problem confrontation ranged from 30 to 38 against a possible range of 10 to 40 with an average of 33.51 and standard deviation of 3.016. The FAEOs were classified into three categories according to their problem confrontation score.

Table 1. Distribution of FAEOs of DAE according to their problem confrontation

Categories	Respondents		Mean	Standard deviation
	Number	Percent		
Low (up to 30)	10	15.38	33.51	3.016
Medium (31-35)	33	50.77		
High (above 35)	22	33.85		
Total	65	100		

Source: Author’s estimation

Data contained in the Table 1 reveal that overwhelming majority of FAEOs (84.62 percent) had enough problem confrontation ranged from medium (50.77 percent) to high (33.85m percent). Only 15.38 percent had low problem confrontation in performing their job activities. It is a common observation that greater is the problem confrontation by an individual in any work the lesser is his/her progress in that work. It is therefore, likely that the FAEOs problem confrontation will create adverse effect on their job as well on diffusion of innovation. This study indicates that most of the FAEOs had medium to high problem confrontation. Though FAEOs are conscious officers, but some problems such as transferring, promotion, some critical field problem etc. they

can't solve. It indicates that the desired level of success will not be achieved if the different problem confrontation by the FAEOs were not solved by the concerned authority.

Table 2. Salient features of different selected characteristics of FAEOs'

Characteristics	Observed range	Categories	Respondents		Mean	Standard Deviation
			Number	%		
Age (in years)	35-51	Young (up to 35)	28	43.08	35.80	4.845
		Middle aged (36-50)	36	55.38		
		Old aged (above 50)	1	1.54		
Professional Commitment (score)	20-30	Low (up to 23)	03	4.62	27.52	2.265
		Medium (24-27)	14	21.54		
		High (above 27)	48	73.84		
Job performance (Score)	43-60	Low (up to 43)	11	16.92	48.51	4.985
		Medium (44-54)	47	72.31		
		High (above 54)	7	10.77		
Technological knowledge (Score)	2-16	Low (2-5)	24	36.92	6.74	4.810
		Medium (6-10)	32	49.23		
		High (above 10)	09	13.85		
Motivation (Score)	20-30	Low (20-23)	07	10.77	23.20	2.556
		Medium (24-27)	39	60.00		
		High (28-30)	19	29.23		
Supervision (Score)	30-40	Low (30-33)	36	55.38	32.89	2.373
		Medium (34-37)	28	43.08		
		High (38-40)	01	1.54		
Personality (Score)	30-38	Low (30-32)	24	36.92	33.68	2.878
		Medium (33-35)	20	30.77		
		High (above 35)	21	32.31		
Training (number of days)	1-105	Low (01-07)	23	35.38	38.48	40.101
		Medium (above 07)	42	64.62		
Initiativeness of addressing farmers problem (Score)	16-28	Low (16-20)	29	44.62	21.58	3.508
		Medium (21-25)	25	38.46		
		High (above 25)	11	16.92		

Source: Author's estimation

Data contained in Table 2 indicates that majority of the respondents (98.46 percent) ranged from young aged to middle aged categories. A large portion of the respondents (95.38 percent) had professional commitment ranged from medium to high. Overwhelming majority (89.23 percent) had low to medium job performance. About two thirds (63.08 percent) of the respondent had technological knowledge ranged from medium to high. About nine-tenths (89.23 percent) of the respondents had motivation ranged from medium to high. Most of the respondents (98.46 percent) had supervision ranged from low to medium. Majority of the respondents (67.69 percent) had personality ranged from low to medium and 64.62 percent had medium training. Overwhelming majority (83.08 percent) of FAEOs had low to medium initiatives of addressing farmers' problems.

Relationship of selected characteristics of FAEOs with the extent of problem confrontation

The summary of the results of correlation analysis has been presented in Table 3 showing the relationship between selected characteristics of FAEOs' with their problem confrontation capacity.

Table 3. Pearson product moment correlation analysis of nine independent variables with the problem confrontation

Independent variable	Calculated value of "r"	Dependent variable
Age	0.089 ^{NS}	Problem confrontation of the FAEOs of DAE
Professional commitment	-0.088 ^{NS}	
Job performance	0.229 ^{NS}	
Technological knowledge	-0.162 ^{NS}	
Motivation	0.0272*	
Supervision	-0.222 ^{NS}	
Personality	0.257*	
Training	0.115 ^{NS}	
Initiativeness of addressing farmers problem	-0.219 ^{NS}	

NS = Non Significant, ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (63 df)

* = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (63 df)

Source: Author's estimation

Findings of table 3 reveals motivation and personality had significant relationship with problem confrontation. Whereas, professional age, commitment, job performance, technological knowledge, training and initiative of addressing farmer's problem had no significant relationship with problem confrontation. Every job has some commitment and everybody need to be respectful to these commitments. But some problems affect the professional commitment. The success of DAE depends upon the degree of professional commitment of agricultural extension officers including FAEOs. FAEOs as their job responsibility, try to understand farmers' problems, co-operate with them, visit farmers' fields, monitoring to solve farmers problem. When age increases problem confrontation capacity as well as job performance also increases. Some problem they try to solve their own interest. But organizational problems such frequent transfer, lengthy promotion, any recognition for good work, any career development facilities etc. hinder their job performance. As the supply of practice instruments is very low. So, DAE should provide more technological instrument to different Upazilla. DAE provides proper training system to all employees. But duration of training is too short. At a short time, many employees do not capture entire training skill. So, duration of some training should be increased. The relationship between motivation and problem confrontation capacity is significant. Some motivational factors increase their problem confrontation capacity. FAEOs motives farmers for adopting new technologies. According to commitment female agriculture extension officers always tries to identify farmers problem and help farmers how to solve the problem. They participate all from of training and meeting to acquire knowledge. Good personality such as fair agricultural knowledge, leadership quality, understanding capacity, skill, punctuality also help to increase their problem handling capacity. But due to lack of farmers' knowledge, lack of sufficient instruments or training they cannot perform their work properly. From their view they are not satisfied with their job environment. For improvement of job responsibilities, DAE should take necessary actions like: providing necessary supports and facilities e.g. office room, transport facilities, more travel allowance, training materials etc. to the FAEOs to perform their job properly so that they remain satisfied with their job.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of findings and their interpretation it was found that most of the FAEOs had confronted problems in performing their job. Motivation and personality had significant relationship with their problem confrontation. So motivation on particular task and good personality help FAEOs to handle the problem in a correct way which ultimately increase the self confidence in her job sector and as well as decrease problem confrontation. Therefore, adequate steps like proper supervision, guidance, counseling and training of FAEOs should be taken to overcome problem confrontation.

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