

Job performance of Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers in respect of 25 criteria

A. Ahmed, M.E. Haque¹, M.E. Haque, B.K. Biswas and S. Begum²

Department of Agriculture Extension, Khamabari, Dhaka, ¹Department of Agriculture Extension & Rural Development, BSMRAU, Salna, Gazipur and ²Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture, Mymensingh.

Abstract: The study was conducted to assess the job performance of the Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer (SAAO) working under the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and to explore the relationship of some selected job items with their job performance. Data were collected from randomly selected 60 SAAOs of Comilla and Khulna district during March to April, 2009. Analysis of the selected job items indicated that most of them were not performed by SAAOs with desired importance. Among the selected job items, performance of SAAOs in their participation in weekly conference was found very well. Regarding job responsibilities, working with group and communication behaviour, majority of the respondents were found medium performer. About 67% of the selected SAAOs showed over all medium job performance. An intensive and careful consideration should be maintained by the controlling officers of the Department of Agricultural Extension to improve the job performance of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers.

Keywords: Characteristics, job performance, SAAOs.

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 Sub Assistant Agriculture Officer (SAAO) plays vital role in dissemination of modern technology to the farmers in Bangladesh as only the front line extension workers of the DAE. They are the individuals who communicate with the farmers, analyze farmers' situation, problems and need. Performance in a job is greatly determined by an individual's ability to do it (Porter and Lawler, 1968). But abilities and motivation of individuals are largely determined by their characteristics and a number of characteristics of individual affect the quality and quantity of his performance (Vinake, 1962). Individual's personality system is composed of various interrelated characteristics such as personal, social, psychological, socio-economic and environmental characteristics and these characteristics of an individual can be considered to have influence on his job performance. This study is, therefore, undertaken to focus on the job performance of SAAOs under the Department of Agricultural Extension in assisting the farming community for the farmers' socio-economic development in Bangladesh.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted to assess the job performance of the Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer (SAAO) working under the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and to explore the relationship of some selected job items with their job performance. During March to April, 2009, data were collected from randomly selected 60 SAAOs of six upazilas, each of three from Comilla and Khulna district where the population size was 185. A twenty five item rating scale-was constructed by using the 25 criteria

for rating the performance of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers by superior rating which represented twenty five major areas of the duties and responsibilities of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers. Upazila Agriculture Officer/Additional Agriculture Officer (AAO)/Agriculture Extension Officer (AEO) indicated the quality of performance on each item by putting a tick mark against any one of the four responses namely, very good, good, medium and poor that assigned with a weights of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Data regarding job performance were analyzed for studying two aspects of the job performance. These were comparative performance of Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers on 25 criteria and overall job performance. Performance index is the cumulative performance of the SAAOs on 25 job criteria and it was calculated by Performance Index (PI) = $P_{vg} \times 4 + P_g \times 3 + P_m \times 2 + P_p \times 1$. Where, P_{vg} = performance of SAAOs with very good performance, P_g = percentage of SAAOs with good performance, P_m = percentage of SAAOs with medium performance, P_p = percentage of SAAOs with poor performance.

Results and Discussion

A rank order of 25 criteria according to their performance indices have been presented in Table 1 for clear understanding of the comparative performance of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers on the 25 criteria of their job performance that ranged from 135 to 202 where the performance of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers in respect of participation in the weekly conference in Upazila Agriculture Office was the highest (PI-202) and attendance at farmer's group meeting is the second highest (PI-197). Performance in respect of role of SAAO about circulation of Krishikatha was the lowest (PI-135) and helping farmers to adopt family planning measures was the second lowest (PI-138). The performance of need assessment, knowledge of pest management, formation of new group, observation of field days, farmer selection of demonstration and motivation was much below from the maximum possible level of performance. The reason behind it might be due to the lack of good administrative management, lack of sincerity, transport, office cum residence, lack of proper guidance and counseling. Performance of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers on each 25 criterion was divided into five sub-groups and determined on the basis of superior rating. These were

responsibilities, working with group, communication behavior, knowledge level and attitude of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers and here 1st four are

discussed in the Table 2 which are more closely related with job performance.

Table 1. Comparative performance of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers on twenty five criteria of their job performance and performance indices

Criteria for job performance	Opinion of the respondents								PI	Rank order
	Very good		Good		Medium		Poor			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Participation in weekly conference in Upazila Agriculture Office	28	46.7	26	43.3	6	10.0	0	0	202	1st
Attendance at farmer's group meeting	10	16.7	21	35.0	22	36.7	7	11.6	197	2nd
Honesty	18	30.0	32	53.3	7	11.7	3	5.0	185	3rd
Sincerity	17	28.3	30	50.0	7	11.7	6	10.0	178	4th
Friendly behavior of SAAO with farmers	17	28.3	28	46.7	10	16.7	5	8.3	177	5th
Regular maintaining of diary	15	25.0	32	53.3	7	11.7	6	10	176	6th
Attending at Union Agricultural Committee meeting	16	26.7	29	48.3	9	15.0	6	10.0	175	7th
Timely input supply to the farmers	14	23.3	30	50.0	13	21.7	3	5.0	175	8th
Becoming familiar with his block	15	25.0	31	51.7	8	13.3	6	10.0	175	9th
Preparation of fortnight work plan for approval by AEO	16	26.7	29	48.3	8	13.3	7	11.7	174	10th
Site selection of demonstration	12	20.0	32	53.3	12	20.0	4	6.7	172	11th
Farmer selection of demonstration	12	20.0	32	53.3	12	20.0	4	6.7	172	12th
Working with the existing groups	11	18.3	26	43.3	19	31.7	4	6.7	164	13th
Capability of solving the problem instantly	7	11.7	33	55.0	17	28.3	3	5.0	164	14th
Observation of Field days	11	18.3	29	48.3	12	20.0	8	13.3	163	15th
Distribution of leaflets, booklets, posters etc among the farmers	10	16.7	30	50.0	12	20.0	8	13.3	162	16th
Motivational performance	7	11.7	35	58.3	11	18.3	7	11.7	162	17th
Routine wise field visit	10	16.7	26	43.3	18	30.0	6	10.0	160	18th
Follow up farmers training	12	20.0	28	46.7	8	13.3	12	20.0	160	19th
Introduction of improved agricult. practices among the farmers	8	13.3	30	50.0	14	23.3	8	13.3	158	20th
Needs assessment	11	19.4	32	53.3	12	20.0	5	8.3	155	21st
Knowledge of pest management	7	11.7	26	43.3	22	36.7	5	8.3	155	22nd
Formation of new group	6	10.0	23	38.3	23	38.3	8	13.3	147	23th
Helping farmers to adopt family planning measures	2	3.3	24	40.0	24	40.0	10	16.7	138	24th
Role of SAAO about the circulation of Krishikatha	7	11.7	13	21.7	29	46.7	12	20.0	135	25th

Responsibilities of the SAAOs: The responsibilities of the SAAOs investigated in this study to relate to their job performance were routine wise field visit, observation of field days, regular maintaining of diary, preparation of fortnight work plan for approval by AEO, attending at union agricultural committee meeting and participation in the weekly conference in Upazilla agriculture office and routine wise field visit. The probable responsibilities scores of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers were ranged from 6 to 24. The computed scores ranged from 13 to 22 with an average 18.96 and standard deviation was 2.57. Data shown in Table 2 indicated that almost 90 percent respondents had performed medium responsibilities 6.7 percent had high responsibilities and 3.3 percent had low responsibilities in Khulna district. In case of Comilla district, 50 percent respondents had medium responsibilities 26.7 percent had high responsibilities and 23.3 percent had low responsibilities of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers. Majority (70%) of the respondents had medium level responsibilities in the study area. The value of the three responsibility levels (low, medium and high) showed reasonable variation between the two districts due to the variation in the integrated effects of different extension programmes and perspectives. About 97.7% of the respondents performed medium to high responsibility performance which was desired. The reason behind it might be due to the more

specification and accountability of job criteria of the SAAOs.

Working with group of the SAAOs: The job items of SAAOs regarding working with groups in this study to relate to their job performance were need assessment, working with the existing groups, formation of new group, attendance at farmer's group meeting and follow up farmers training. The probable scores for working with group of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers ranged from 5 to 20. The computed scores ranged from 11 to 19 with an average of 15.63 and standard deviation was 2.23. On the basis of working with group scores, the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers were divided into three categories: low, medium and high. Data contained in the Table 2 revealed that 80 percent respondents had medium performance in working with group, 13.3 percent had low performance and 6.7 percent had high performance in working with group in Khulna district. In case of Comilla district, 43.3 percent respondents had medium performance, 33.3 percent had high performance in working with group and 23.3 percent had low performance in working with group. On an average, 18.3% respondents belonged to low working performance with group, 61.65% respondents had medium working performance with group and 20% had high working performance with group. Majority (61.65%) of the respondents had medium level working with group in the study area. The performance of

working with group in different categories showed reasonable variation between the two districts due to the variation in the integrated effects of different extension programmes and perspectives. About 82% of the respondents performed medium to high working performance with group which was good. The result behind it might be due to the group approach system of DAE in transferring agricultural technologies to the farmers.

Communication behaviour of the SAAOs: The job criteria towards communication behaviour of the SAAOs

investigated in this study to relate to their job performance were site selection of demonstration, farmer selection of demonstration, timely input supply to the farmers, distribution of leaflets, booklets, posters etc. among the farmers and role of SAAO's about the circulation of Krishikatha. The probable communication behavior scores of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers ranged from 5 to 20. The computed scores ranged from 8 to 15 with an average 11.83 and standard deviation was 2.30.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to sub group of their 25 criteria

Sub-group criterion	Probable range	Computed range	Categories	Respondents percent (N=60)			Mean	SD
				Khulna (N=30)	Comilla (N=30)	Total (N=60)		
Responsibilities of SAAOs	6-24	13-22	Low responsibilities (Up to 13)	3.3	23.3	13.3	18.96	2.57
			Medium responsibilities (14 to 18)	90.0	50.0	70.0		
			High responsibilities (Above 18)	6.7	26.7	16.7		
Working with group	5-20	11-19	Low work with group (Up to 13)	13.3	23.3	18.3	15.63	2.23
			Medium work with group (14 to 20)	80.0	43.3	61.65		
			High work with group (Above 20)	6.7	33.3	20.0		
Communication behaviour of SAAOs	5-20	8-15	Low communication behaviour (up to 9)	20.0	23.3	21.6	11.83	2.30
			Medium communication behaviour (10 to 13)	50.0	56.7	53.3		
			High communication behaviour (Above 13)	30.0	20.0	25.0		
Level of knowledge of SAAOs	4-16	7-15	Low level knowledge (up to 9)	23.3	20.0	21.65	11.56	2.26
			Medium level knowledge (10 to 13)	60.0	66.7	63.35		
			High level knowledge (Above 13)	16.7	13.3	15.0		

Data contained in Table 2 indicated that 50 percent respondents had medium communication behavior, 20 percent had low communication behavior and 30 percent had high communication behavior in Khulna district. In case of Comilla district, 56.7 percent respondents had medium communication behaviour, 20 percent of the respondents had high and 23.3 percent low communication behaviour. On an average, 21.65% respondents performed low communication behaviour, 53.35% respondents had medium communication behaviour and 25% respondents belonged to high communication behaviour. Majority percent of the respondents had medium level communication behavior in the study area. The value of the three communication performance (low, medium and high) was found to have reasonable variation between the two districts due to the variation in the integrated effects of different extension programmes and perspectives. Seventy five percent of the respondents belonged to medium and high communication behaviour performance which was much below from the maximum level of performance. It might be due to the lack of sincerity of the SAAOs, lack of proper guidance and training, lack of transport and office cum residence for the SAAOs.

Level of knowledge of the SAAOs: The knowledge of the SAAOs studied in this research to relate to their job performance were capability of solving the problem instantly, knowledge of pest management, motivational performance and introduction of improved agricultural practices among the farmers. The probable knowledge level scores of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers ranged from 4 to 16. The computed scores ranged from 7 to 15 with an average 11.56 and standard deviation was 2.26. On the basis of knowledge level scores, the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers were divided into three categories: low, medium and high. Data presented in Table

2 indicated that 60 percent respondents had medium level of knowledge, 23.3 percent had low level of knowledge and 16.7 percent had high level of knowledge in Khulna district. In case of Comilla district, 66.7 percent respondents had medium level of knowledge, 13.3 percent of the respondents had high level of knowledge and 20 percent low level of knowledge. On an average 21.65% respondents belonged to low level knowledge, 63.35% respondents had medium level of knowledge and 15% respondents obtained high level performance of knowledge. Majority percent of the respondents had medium to high level of knowledge in both districts. The scores of knowledge of job performance showed distinct variation between the two districts due to the variation of on going extension activities and perspectives. About 78% of the respondents had performed medium to high level knowledge of performance which was much below from the maximum level of performance. The reason behind it might be due to the lack of sincerity of the SAAOs, lack of proper guidance, training and supervision.

Overall Job Performance: In an organization, management tries to coordinate various factors of production in such a way that each factor contributes to its maximum efficiency to achieve organizational goals. So far as non-human factors i.e. materials, machines etc. are concerned, their efficiency depends largely upon the type of technology being followed by the performance level of human factors that handle and control these non-human factors. Thus, to make total factors efficient and effective one has to improve the performance level of human beings in the organization. This performance is determined by two factors, viz. level of ability and level of motivation. Further, these 2 factors are to be multiplied rather than added. This can be expressed as: Performance = Ability X Motivation.

Thus performance level would be high, if both these are high. If a worker is very capable of doing certain things, but he is otherwise not willing to do the work, his performance level would not be high. While ability to do is governed by education and training willingness to do can be effected by the factors governing human behaviour in the organization (Prasad, 1998).

On the basis of job criteria, the probable job performance scores of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers ranged from 100 to 1600. Computed job performance scores ranged from 494 to 1120 with an average 747.51 and standard deviation was 147.26. On the basis of job performance scores, the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers were divided into three categories and shown in Fig. 1.

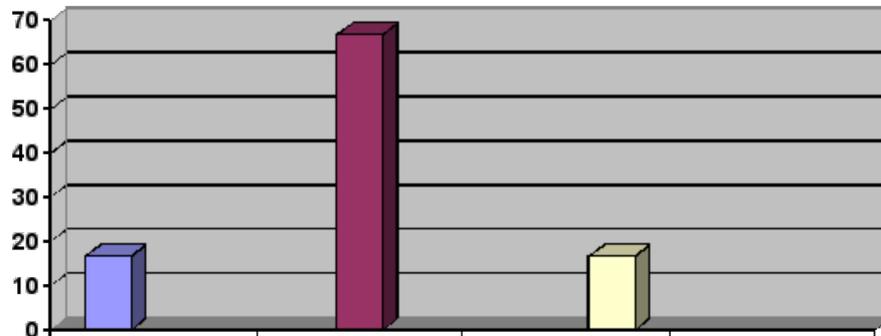


Fig. 1. Distribution of respondents according to their job performance

Above Fig. 1 indicates that 66.6 percent respondents had medium level of performance, 16.7 percent had high level of performance and 16.7 percent had low level of performance. Majority percent of the respondents had medium level performance. The high level of performance (16.7%) was much below from the maximum level of performance. The result behind it might be due to the retarded implementation of new agricultural extension policy, lack of good administrative management, lack of honesty and sincerity of the SAAOs, lack of proper guidance, supervision, transport, training and office cum residence for the SAAOs. The findings of the study indicate comparatively better performance than that of by Rahman (1995). The trend of the performance of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers was increasing. So, an intensive and careful consideration should be maintained by the controlling officers of the Department of

Agricultural Extension to improve the job performance of the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers.

References

- Porter, I.W. and Lawler, F.E. 1968. *Managerial Attitude and Performance*. Home wood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc, USA.
- Prasad, A. 1976. *The Block Development Officers a Portrait of Bureaucracy in India*. Patna: Associated Book Agency.
- Rahman, M. M. 1995. *Trainers' Perception Toward the Training of Trainers (ToT) Programmes Conducted at CERDI*. MS Thesis. Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, Salna, Gazipur.
- Vinake, W.E. 1962. *Motivation as Complex Problem*, In Jones, M.R(cd.). *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.