

## PERCEPTION OF AGRICULTURAL OFFICIALS REGARDING FUNCTIONING OF DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENTS

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### ABSTRACT

*The very nature of research organisations loaded with bureaucratic structure and control is more likely to alienate scientists from their organisations rather than motivating them by providing healthy work culture. The general work culture of research organisations especially in developing countries promotes only accomplishment of routine things which not only reduces success of achieving desired goal but also hampers the efficiency of workers. Considering these facts the present study was conducted to see the perception of agricultural officials regarding functioning of development departments. The results clearly indicated that most of the respondents had critical views of the functioning of the development departments; they resent against the development functioning of the public system and want the system to change its functioning.*

**Key Words :** Agricultural officials; Development departments

### INTRODUCTION

An understanding of the functioning of development departments and their processes is important for promoting agricultural and rural development. Planning programmes and designing development strategy are no doubt, important, but more important is their effective implementation. According to Dreze and Sen (1989), the key to success of development endeavours in Asian countries like Malaysia and South Korea is the effective implementation of public programs. It is well known by now that the major impediments to development process in India, is not the lack of planning but the effective implementation of the development programs which suffer from bureaucratic rigidity, lack of people's participation, target orientation, tokenism etc. All these are viewed as systemic characteristic of the development departments in India. The agricultural change agents perceive development system, is important for the pursuit of agricultural and rural development. Hence, an attempt was made in the present study to assess the perceptions of farm scientists about the functioning of public system carrying out development programmes.

### METHODOLOGY

For the present study data were collected from eighty agricultural scientists/officials from ICAR institutes and SAUs with the help of a scale developed for the purpose which consisted of items on seven dimensions of the Public system which are -rigidity, centralization, number and target syndrome, lack of community participation, rentier dole syndrome, tokenism and paternalistic manipulativenness. The scale named as DF-scale was developed and tested for its reliability and validity by Mehta (1989) consisted of statements representing each of the seven components, which are representing each of seven components and rated on a four point scale. The 'strongly agreed' response was assigned a score of four and in descending order 'strongly disagreed' a score of one.

### Concepts of seven dimensions in the present study

1. Caste like rigidity refers to the tendency present in public system, which is symptomised as inflexibility based on perceived self-pompousness which rigidity discriminate self from others. Indian bureaucracy is a serious victim of this closed caste like service-cader viz., Brahminism, etc. This does not permit the administrator; manager or change agents of development programs to effectively empathize with the client system that base their actions on logic completely deprived of spontaneity.
2. Centralization refers to some sort of self-isolation that does not yield space to others and directs all the actions with absolute authority. They are swollen-headed decision-makers and prescribers
3. Number and target syndrome refers to the officials' concern for physical evidence of work rather than the qualitative outcome of work, which implies impersonal involvement and almost complete lack of concern for well being of others. It is formal rather than emotional; it is work for the sake of work rather than for the sake of growth and development.
4. Lack of community participation refers to dissociating clients from the activities carried out for them. It believes in the doctrine development program i.e., "of the Govt." "for the people" "by the bureaucracy" and not "of the people, for the people, and by the people". It is because of this that the development programs often miss to hit the goal and always seriously suffers from sustainability.
5. Rentier-dole syndrome refers to the lack of seriousness of purpose. It reflects the attitude of public functionaries towards development as an act of compassion born out of pity for the people who are perceived as helpless, in capable, miserable and so on.
6. Tokenism refers to public functionaries' lack of faith in development programs and activities. They are there

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because they need the job for themselves and they somehow manage to pass time and keep their job.

7. Paternalistic manipulative ness refers to exploitation of work situation by the public functionaries to satisfy their need to feel big by making others feel small. It is an act of manipulation of situation to make others seek dependence, support, undue favour etc. so that own ego may get a boost by assuming artificial power.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The DF inventory that consisted of 21 statements in all are rated on a four-point scale can yield a score ranging between 21 and 84 for any respondent. The obtainable score were partitioned into four quarters and the frequencies of respondents falling under each quarter were worked out as reported in Table 1. The range of the scores obtained by the respondents varied from 21 to 61 only.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents in the four quarters of DF scores (N = 80)

Category	DF Scores	Frequency
1st quarter	21-36	13 (16.25)
2nd quarter	37-52	55 (68.75)
3rd quarter	53-68	12 (15.0)
4th quarter	69-84	00 (00.0)
Mean		42.313
Range		21 to 61

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

The data in Table 1 show the distribution of agricultural scientists/officials on the basis of their obtained scores. DF-scale is a continuum of perceived public system performance or conduct. Lower the obtained score, greater is the critical assessment of development functioning by the respondents. Thus they indicate resentment with or criticism of the system. On the other hand higher obtained scores indicate respondent's defense of system (status quo ism). The obtained scores, therefore, provide an evaluation of the functioning of public system in India, which is bipolar in nature. Defense of the system (status quo ism) represents one pole and resentment with or criticism of the system (i.e., change proneness) represents the other pole. The data reported in Table 1 reveal that the mean DF score of respondents fall in the lower half of the second quarter of the obtainable scores, which ranged from 21 to 52. Therefore, data clearly indicate that most of the respondents had critical views of the functioning of the development departments; they resented against the development functioning of the public system and want the system to change its functioning.

If we look into the extent of criticality, it appears very high in case of less than one fourth of the respondents (16.25% precisely). Similarly, those who are status quo of the system are also very few-only 15 per cent having DF score varying between 53 and 68 (third quarter). Complete absence of the respondents in the fourth quarter of the score range is however,

noteworthy. There is none amongst the respondents who defends the system strongly. A great majority of the respondents fell in the second quarter and hovered around the mean score value, clearly indicating there by that they are only mildly critical of the public system, they are not prone to assert for change. In order to understand the respondents' orientation towards each of the seven components or dimensions of development functioning, the data was reset component wise as reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Dimensions (development functioning) wise scores obtained by the respondents (N=80)

Dimensions	Frequency
Caste like Rigidity	
3 - 5	45 (56.3)
6 - 8	35 (43.7)
9 - 12	00 (00.0)
Mean	5.1755
Range	3 - 8
Centralization	
3 - 5	30 (37.5)
6 - 8	48 (60.0)
9 - 12	02 (02.5)
Mean	5.837
Range	3 - 11
Number and Target Syndrome	
3 - 5	23 (28.7)
6 - 8	53 (66.3)
9 - 12	04 (05.0)
Mean	6.112
Range	3 - 10
Lack of Community Participation	
3 - 5	20 (25.0)
6 - 8	48 (60.0)
9 - 12	12 (15.0)
Mean	6.612
Range	3 - 10
Rentier Dole Syndrome	
3 - 5	28 (35.0)
6 - 8	43 (53.8)
9 - 12	09 (11.2)
Mean	6.175
Range	3 - 11
Tokenism	
3 - 5	22 (27.5)
6 - 8	54 (67.5)
9 - 12	04 (05.0)
Mean	6.175
Range	3 - 10
Paternalistic Manipulative ness	
3 - 5	24 (30.0)
6 - 8	47 (57.8)
9 - 12	09 (11.2)
Mean	6.312
Range	3 - 10

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

The obtainable scores in each dimension varied between 3 and 12 with mean or mid-value of 7.5. A cursory look at the scores obtained by the respondents on the seven dimensions of the scale brought to light striking uniformity in the mean scores obtained by them. In six out of seven dimensions they fell very close to 6 on either side of it finding a place at the beginning of 2nd quarter, where as in case of one dimension

(caste like rigidity) they fell close to the end of the first quarter showing a relatively stronger resentment against the existing functioning. In all the dimensions however, the obtained scores were below the mid-point of the scale indicating thereby a sense of rejection or disapproval of the present functioning of the development systems.

### CONCLUSION

In India, Public systems in general are manned at the upper echelon and managed by the administrative cadre in

both state and central governments, where as most of the development technical cadre staff dealing directly with the people carries out actions at operational land. There is no inter class or cadre mobility in service, which seems to have bred, inter class antagonistic feelings between the management and the technical cadres. Bureaucracy is a need by the management cadre to control the technical cadre, which has generated resentment in them. This is so clearly reflected in the data reported in this study.

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