

## Role Performance of Agricultural Extension Personnel in the Revitalized Extension System in Assam

D. Bortamuly<sup>1</sup> and P.K. Das<sup>2</sup>

1. Asstt. Manager, NEDFi, Guwahati, Assam 2. Professor, Deptt. of Extension Education, Biswanath College of Agriculture, AAU, Jorhat (Assam)  
Corresponding author e-mail: dbortamuly@nedfi.com

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study was carried out in the 11 districts of Assam to access the level of role performance as perceived by the agricultural extension personnel in the revitalized extension system in Assam. A purposive sampling technique was followed and statistical methods such as frequency, percentage, standard deviation, Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation, Fisher's 't' test and multiple regression analysis were used for analysing the data. Data were collected through personal interview method during the period of 2015. A total of 112 respondents were interviewed with the help of the structured schedule. A total of 15 independent variables were selected for the study which was categorized into three categories, namely 'Personal variables', 'Psychological variables' and 'Organizational variables'. The study implies that the level of role performance of the respondents had positive and significant correlation with service experience, training exposure, role awareness, role perception, attitude towards ATMA, achievement motivation, motivational climate and job satisfaction. The value of coefficient of multiple determination ( $R^2$ ) being 0.825 indicated that the positively correlated significant variables jointly could predict 82.50 per cent of the variation in level of role performance of the extension personnel.*

**Key words:** *Level of role performance; Agriculture Technology and Management Agency (ATMA); Extension reform;*

In country like India where Agro-climatic zones widely differ besides significant variation in socio-economic status of farmers', uniform extension service is not the panacea for all the regions. It has been realized that the public sector extension system on its own is not capable enough to meet the ever increasing and multi-faceted demands of the farming community due to several constraints or weaknesses in the system. It was realized that public extension system will have to be placed in new decentralized institutional arrangements which are demand driven, farmer-accountable, bottom-up and have farming system approach. To address the situation, the Government of India (GOI) and the World Bank pilot-tested a new, decentralized, market-driven extension model under the National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP). The Key institution in implementing this new approach was the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) which was responsible for facilitating and coordinating "farmer-led"

extension activities within each district.

The Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) calls for integrated approach wherein different stakeholders come closer to plan, organise, and execute the activities to take full advantage of the technologies demonstrated in the operational area. In the midst of this change, extension system is grappling with the question of how best to harness 'extension reform' to improve farming community. The effective implementation of 'ATMA' largely depends on how effectively the extension functionaries perceive their roles and perform those. There have been very few studies related to performance appraisal of the extension functionaries working under this changing scenario. Performance deals with the outcomes, results and accomplishments achieved by a person, group or organization". The role performance in the study has been operationally defined as the accomplishment, execution, carrying out, working out of anything ordered

or undertaken, the doing of any action or work to (*Oxford English Dictionary, 2001*). Hence, the present study was contemplated to measure the level of role performed as perceived by the agricultural extension personnel in the revitalized extension system in Assam.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Assam, one of the states of North-eastern India. At the time of the study, there were 27 districts in Assam. Out of these, 11 (eleven) districts were purposively selected for the study because Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) was first constituted in these districts under the World Bank aided Assam Agricultural Competitiveness Project (AACP). A total of 112 agricultural development officers were selected and interviewed in the 11 selected districts for the study. A total of 15 independent variables were selected for the study which were categorized into three categories, namely 'Personal variables', 'Psychological variables' and 'Organizational variables'. Out of 15 variables, age, educational qualification, service experience, and training exposure were classified as personal variables, decision making ability, role awareness, role perception, job involvement, role conflict, role ambiguity, attitude towards ATMA and achievement motivation as psychological variables and motivational climate, job satisfaction and job anxiety as organizational variables. The primary data in the present study were collected directly from the respondents with the help of the structured schedule through personal interview method. The data analysis was done by using various statistical methods which were frequency, percentage, standard deviation, Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation, Fisher's 't' test and multiple regression analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Relationship between the independent variables and level of role performance* : The study revealed (Table 1) that the level of role performance of the respondents had positive and significant correlation with service experience ( $r=0.364^{**}$ ), training exposure ( $r=0.337^{**}$ ), role awareness ( $r=0.656^{**}$ ), role perception ( $r=0.593^{**}$ ), attitude towards ATMA ( $r=0.597^{**}$ ), achievement motivation ( $r=0.653^{**}$ ), motivational climate ( $r=0.548^{**}$ ) and job satisfaction ( $r=0.498^{**}$ ). It

**Table 1. Relationship between the independent variables and role performance (N=112)**

Independent variables	'r' value	't' value
Age	0.176	1.916
Educational qualification	0.068	0.710
Service experience	0.364**	4.102
Training exposure	0.337**	3.755
Decision making ability	0.161	1.712
Role awareness	0.656**	9.110
Role perception	0.593**	7.715
Job involvement	0.178	1.902
Role conflict	-0.498**	-6.023
Role ambiguity	0.129	1.367
Attitude towards ATMA	0.597**	7.812
Achievement motivation	0.653**	9.033
Motivational climate	0.548**	6.861
Job satisfaction	0.498**	6.015
Job anxiety	-0.523**	-6.438

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level of probability

can be seen that variables like role awareness, attitude towards ATMA, achievement motivation and motivational climate had moderately strong relationship with the role performance of the extension personnel, the variables service experience, training exposure and job satisfaction showed relatively weaker relationship with the role performance of the extension personnel. The variables 'Training exposure' and 'Service experience' showed significant relationship with the level of performance of extension personnel. The reason might be the fact that higher exposure to training developed better insight through increased information and participation with different sources of information. The people who had high degree of 'Training exposure' and 'Service experience' were more likely to have social mobility, more expose to outside contact and had a tendency to change over to new ideas and culture rather than remaining conservative and tradition oriented. They might consider ATMA as an enterprise and therefore, might have better contacts with information generating sources as well as extension agencies to seek specific knowledge under extension reform. The findings of *Awasthi et al. (2001)*, *Yadav et al. (2010)*, *Das et al. (2010)* and *Maiti et al. (2011)* conforms to this findings.

Positive relationship with 'Attitude towards ATMA' suggests that most of the extension functionaries were more aware about the importance of ATMA which

ultimately influenced high and whole hearted participation in performance. The positive relationship with 'Role awareness' and 'Role perception' suggest that they were more conscious about their role and their duties which ultimately influence the performance level. Increased awareness and perception of their role increases their involvement in their role which has reflected through the positive relationship between role involvement and role performance. The variable 'Achievement motivation' showed significant relationship with the level of performance of extension personnel. This might be because of the fact that the respondents spontaneously expressed desire to do something well for its own sake which is ultimately reflected through their increased level of performance. The findings of *Reddy and Jayaramaiah (1990)*, *Manjunath and Shashidhra (2011)* conforms to this findings.

The organizational variables like 'Motivational climate' and 'Job satisfaction' were positively correlated with the level of role performance. The degree of happiness with one's job and working environment is related with the performance level. It suggests that the prevailing environment in the organization activates, energizes, and directs the employee towards the achievement of organizational and personal goals. Positive relationship was found between 'Job satisfaction' and 'Performance'. It might be because of the fact that with the fair amount of job satisfaction's component like job security, recognition and fair evaluation, human relation at work, future prospects, capacity and confidence to shoulder job responsibilities increases the performance level of the employee of an institution. The findings of *Judge and Hulin (1993)*, *Judge et al. (2001)*, *Adeyemi (2008)*, *Moyes et al. (2008)*, and *Manjunath and Shashidhra (2011)* conforms to this findings.

It is also found out from the study that the role performance had negative and significant correlation with role conflict ( $r = -0.498^{**}$ ) and job anxiety ( $r = -0.523^{**}$ ). Besides, the variables age, educational qualification, decision making ability, job involvement and role ambiguity were found to have no significant relationship with the level of role performance of extension personnel.

*Contributory effects of selected independent variables on the level of role performance* : The study

**Table 2. Contributory effects of selected independent variables on the role performance (N=112)**

Variables	b value	t value
Service experience	1.125**	3.038
Training exposure	0.442**	3.179
Role awareness	1.083**	3.411
Role perception	0.332**	3.127
Role conflict	-0.184	-0.782
Attitude towards ATMA	0.616**	4.289
Achievement motivation	0.382**	2.792
Motivational climate	0.141**	3.014
Job satisfaction	0.519**	4.269
Job anxiety	-1.839**	-3.363

$R^2 = 0.825$       Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.807$       F value = 47.555

\*Significant at 0.05 level probability

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level probability

revealed (Table 2) that service experience ( $b = 1.125^{**}$ ), training exposure ( $b = 0.442^{**}$ ), role awareness ( $b = 1.083^{**}$ ), role perception ( $b = 0.332^{**}$ ), attitude towards ATMA ( $b = 0.616^{**}$ ), achievement motivation ( $b = 0.382^{**}$ ), motivational climate ( $b = 0.141^{**}$ ) and job satisfaction ( $b = 0.519^{**}$ ) had positive and significant contribution towards the role performance of the extension personnel. It can be seen that while service experience, role awareness, attitude towards ATMA, and job satisfaction had moderately strong contribution towards the role performance of the extension personnel, the variables training exposure, role perception, achievement motivation, achievement motivation and motivational climate showed relatively weaker contribution towards the overall role performance of the extension personnel. However, job anxiety ( $-1.839^{**}$ ) had negative contribution towards the role performance while role conflict had no significant contribution.

The value of coefficient of multiple determination ( $R^2$ ) being 0.825 indicated that the ten significant independent variables jointly could predict 82.50 per cent of the variation in level of role performance of the extension personnel. The F value ( $F = 47.555$ ) was also found to be significant. This indicates the significant effectiveness of these independent variables in predicting the variation in the level of role performance when all of them were functioning jointly.

## CONCLUSION

Higher level of role performance is likely to impact positively on employees' and organization's well-being.

A highly significant and positive correlation of independent variables with the level of performance indicated that the extension personnel with longer service experience, higher training exposures, higher role awareness, higher role perception, highly favourable attitude towards ATMA, higher achievement motivation,

more favourable motivational climate and higher job satisfaction were likely to influence the level of role performance to great extent. Where these attributes are at lower level in the extension personnel, suitable management strategies may be adopted to modify their behaviour for increased level of performance of their roles.

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