

## Administrative Factors Affecting Services of Agricultural Extension Agents in Malakand Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Muhammad Israr<sup>1</sup>, Nafees Ahmad<sup>2</sup>, Khalid Nawab<sup>3</sup>, Barkatullah<sup>4</sup> and Shamsher Ali<sup>5</sup>

### Abstract

*Present study was conducted in the two purposely selected districts of Malakand division with the aim to identify administrative factors affecting agricultural extension agent services and extension agent's perception about the departmental policy regarding different administrative factors in the extension department. Data on different aspect of administrative factors were collected through pre-tested structure questionnaire from 100% extension agents of the agriculture extension department of the two districts. Data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and Chi-square test. Main findings of the study revealed that 45% respondents were strongly agreed that the extension agents having large area of jurisdiction and verified by the Chi-square value. Lacking of departmental promotion was mentioned by majority (68%) respondents and the perception was the same in the two districts according to chi-square value. An overwhelming majority (90%) mentioned for lack of involvement in the department decision making. In the department 67% were satisfied about the present system of assessment. Effectiveness of organizational structure of the extension wing to some extent was reported by 40% respondents. Majority (82%) answered for no transfer in the last three years, while 18% answered for transfer and the reasons were nepotism, under rule and politics. For promotion in the department majority (78%) rejected the political pressure and 11% reported for demand of labor by the local political leader. Majority of the respondents answered for the cooperative behavior of the supervisor, colleagues and subordinate. The study findings as a whole concludes that in the area there were a lot of factors affecting the extension agent's services for agricultural development in the area. The study recommends the under control area of jurisdiction, services structure for the extension agents, involvement in department decision policy, improvement in the present structure of assessment of the extension wing and removal of nepotism and political pressure for efficient and sustainable production of agriculture in the country.*

**Key Words:** Agricultural extension agents, departmental promotion, jurisdiction area, subordinate work and behavior, extension wing and system of assessment.

### Introduction

Most of the third world countries having agricultural based economies including Pakistan, In Pakistan agriculture sector contributes 23% to gross domestic production and the total labor force employment in agricultural sector is 42% (GOP, 2010). But productivity for most crops is very low compared with developed countries (FAO, 2010). This is due to

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Rural Development, AMK Campus Mardan, the University of Agriculture, Peshawar, Pakistan

<sup>2</sup> Department of Economics, University of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Pakistan

<sup>3</sup> Department of Agricultural Extension Education and Communication, The University of Agriculture, Peshawar, Pakistan

<sup>4</sup> Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences, The University of Agriculture, Peshawar, AMK Campus Mardan, Pakistan

<sup>5</sup> Higher Education Commission, Islamabad, Pakistan

inadequate access of farmers to better farming technology followed by poor agricultural extension services provided by the agriculture extension agents of the respective department.

Efforts are being made for the uplift of rural community in most of the developing countries having agro oriented village setting. Due to agriculture based economies, these countries are confronting with numerous obstacles in changing their existing socio-economic conditions. Low per capita income, lack of education and other basic amenities of life are the prominent characteristics of these village communities (Ahmad et al., 2009). Extension service in agriculture is indispensable and it offers more than just expert assistance in improvement of production and processing, it also enables flow of information and transfer of knowledge and scientific findings to practice. These activities are performed according to rules which regulate establishing of organization, functioning, goals and fields of operation, ways to execute extension activities by the extension agent, their obligations and rights. Agricultural extension service must provide effective link between holdings-producers, agricultural research and other sources of information. Agricultural extension agents must be aware of psycho-social and social aspects of group action and individual counseling (Zivkovic et al., 2012).

Agricultural extension agents has the objective to assist farmers in improvement of the methods and techniques of agricultural production, increase of income, farm management, productivity and production quality, increase of livelihood sources and elevating of social and educational standards of rural and urban farmers. Agricultural and rural development strategies include clearly and precisely defined human resources policy with aim to manage human potentials at our disposal within extension service.

Agricultural extension services are important policy tools in agricultural and rural development. The extension activities have aimed to teach farmers informally the ways to improve their agricultural practices so that they can adopt new productivity and profit increasing technologies in their farming activities (Mulayim, 1995). Extension agents are those who use available tools effectively to help farmers adopt and apply the new technologies as fast as possible (Ceylan, 1988). These services in Pakistan have been provided to farmers free of charge as a public service. Public extension systems in Pakistan are under increasing pressure to prove their relevance and importance. These public extension systems will need to deal with specific policy and institutional issues and factors that currently hinder their contribution to agricultural development in the country. Therefore, one of priorities in agricultural development of our country is rising of the level of extension operation and establishment of extension service based on modern principles.

Agricultural extension services are facing numerous problems in present times when good solutions are not easy to find. Effectiveness in agricultural extension activities substantially depends on the extension agents services. One of these factors is the administrative factors; affect the extension agent's services for delivering the efficient and substantial services. Therefore, it is very important to know what factors that affect farmers to receive extension services. Resting on the above facts this study is design with the following objectives.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- I. To identify administrative factors affecting agricultural extension agents services in the study area.
- II. To study the extension agents perception about the departmental policy regarding different administrative factors.
- III. To give recommendations on the basis of study findings for agricultural development through effective agricultural extension services in the area.

There is no significant association between variables of interest in the selected districts under null hypothesis, while alternative hypothesis assumes that there is significant association between the variables of interest in the study districts.

## Materials and Methods

Present study was conducted during December, 2012. The population for the study comprised of field workers/assistants and officers of the department of agricultural in the two purposively selected districts (Swat and Buner) of Malakand Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Pakistan. There were a total of 19 field assistant and 5 agriculture officers in district Swat, while in district Buner there were a total of 52 fields assistant and 6 agricultural officers. Summing-up, the total sample size reached to 82, covering 100% of the population of the agricultural extension department in the study districts. All the respondents in the two districts were purposively selected. Furthermore, selection of sample from the two districts will have no problem in the generalization of the results of the study for the whole province in particular and the country in general. Data on different aspects of the administrative factors were selected through a well design pre-tested structure questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics (percentages and averages) and Chi-square test. Lind et al. (2006) formula was used for calculation of the chi-square values.

$$x^2 = \sum \left[ \frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} \right]$$

Where:  $x^2$  Chi-square

$fo$  is an observed frequency

$fe$  is an expected frequency

## Results and Discussion

There are a number of administrative factors affecting the extension agent's services for agricultural development in the world and also in our country. These includes large area of jurisdiction by extension agents, lacking of departmental promotion, subordinate work, receiving training, knowledge of training staff is not upto mark, extension agents satisfaction with the present assessment system in the department, personal involvement in department policy and decision making, present organizational structure of extension wing, transfer and reason of transfer, demand of departmental labor by political leaders from the respondents, performing of duties assigned by immediate boss, supervisor behavior with the respondents, behavior of colleagues with respondents, subordinate behavior with the respondents, discussion start form jurisdiction of the extension agent's area.

### Area of jurisdiction

For the dissemination and adoption of new technology by the farming community, it is necessary that the extension personals must have specified area. Data in table 1 show the respondent's view about the area under jurisdiction. In the sample area 45% of the sample respondents were strongly agreed, 16% agreed, 6% remain undecided, while 20% were disagreed, 13% were strongly disagreed that the area of the jurisdiction was too large. Chi-square value is 37.4562167 suggest that for strong association of interest among the respondents in the selected district that the area of jurisdiction is too large.

**Table: 1 Distribution of respondents on the area of jurisdiction**

District	Conception of respondents					Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Swat	14 (58)	3 (13)	1 (4)	4 (17)	2 (8)	24
Buner	23 (40)	10 (17)	4 (7)	12 (21)	9 (15)	58
Total	37 (45)	13 (16)	5 (6)	16 (20)	11 (13)	82
$\chi^2$ Cal. = 37.4562167, $\chi^2$ Tab. at 5% = 28.86929943						

Source: Field survey, 2012.

### Departmental promotion

Departmental promotion is an important factor in determining of individual satisfaction, ability to work efficiently for the betterment of organization. Respondents were asked about the lacking of promotion in the department. The data presented in table 2 reveals that 68% respondents were strongly agreed, 22%, 5% were agree and undecided, while 4% and 1% of the sample respondents were disagree and strongly disagree about the lacking of departmental promotion in the organization. These results are confirmed by Scott (2004) who stated that to ensure high level job satisfaction to the employee departmental promotion is necessary. The Chi-square value implies that there is association among the respondents in the selected districts about the lacking of departmental promotion. The table concludes that most of the respondents were strongly agreed about the lacking of promotion in the department.

**Table: 2 Distribution of respondents on lacking of promotion**

District	Conception about lacking of promotion					Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Swat	16 (67)	4 (17)	1 (4)	2 (8)	1 (4)	24
Buner	40 (69)	14 (24)	3 (5)	1 (2)	-	58
Total	56 (68)	18 (22)	4 (5)	3 (4)	1 (1)	82
$\chi^2$ Cal. = 30.100543, $\chi^2$ Tab. at 5% = 28.86929943						

Source: Field survey, 2012.

### Extension agent's opinion about subordinate work

Respect for each other within the organization creates the environment of friendship and organization's achievements on sustainable basis. Data in table 3 present the view of respondents about their subordinate work in the department. In research area 33% respondents were strongly agreed, 48% were agreed with the subordinate work with them in harmony. The Chi-square value is 33.67342 stated that there is strong association among the respondents about the subordinate work with them in the two districts of interest. It is concluded that most of the respondents were agreed with the subordinate work with harmony which leads to the sustainable development of organization.

**Table: 3** Distribution of respondents about subordinate work

District	Conception about subordinate work					Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Swat	7 (29)	11 (46)	2 (8)	3 (13)	1 (4)	24
Buner	20 (34)	28 (48)	2 (3)	5 (10)	3 (5)	58
Total	27 (33)	39 (48)	4 (5)	8 (10)	4 (5)	82
$\chi^2$ Cal. = 33.67342, $\chi^2$ Tab. at 5% = 28.86929943						

Source: Field survey, 2012.

### Knowledge of training staff is not up to mark

Training during service is an important factor for the increase of working capabilities and efficiencies of the extension agents. The fruitful knowledge of these trainings helps the extension personals to disseminate the modern technology among the farmers in an efficient manner. Data in table 4 present the views of respondents about the knowledge of training staff imparted trainings to the extension personals. Findings of the data reveal that in the study area 30% respondents were strongly agreed, 26% were agreed with the statement that knowledge of training staff was not up to mark. The results were related to the findings of Khan et al. (2005) stated that the training of the staff in the professional organization is not effective. The same findings was reported by different researcher that Etophia training are badly underused not only due to low budgets but also due to lack of trained coordinators who can design need-based and life skill-oriented training programmes. Staff are largely unmotivated, not sufficiently trained or not in place at all. Skills training areas are all the same in most centres. However, they differ both in the complexity of the content and in the duration of courses, depending on the availability of funds. The training concentrates only on technical know-how and it does not prepare learners for economic activities. Training materials such as tools, working instruments and raw materials are available in insufficient quantities only, and learning materials are virtually absent (Abebe 1996, Asnake 1998, Burckhardt 2000, Guluma 2002, Zelleke 2003).

**Table: 4** Respondents distribution on the knowledge of training staff is not up to mark

District	Conception about knowledge of training Staff					Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Swat	5 (21)	9 (37)	3 (13)	6 (25)	1 (4)	24
Buner	20 (34)	12 (21)	5 (9)	18 (31)	3 (5)	58
Total	25 (30)	21 (26)	8 (10)	24 (29)	4 (5)	82
$\chi^2$ Cal. = 33.67342, $\chi^2$ Tab. at 5% = 28.86929943						

Source: Field survey, 2012.

### Involvement in department policy decision making

Policy decision making is an important factor for the betterment of any organization to achieve their goals on sustainable basis. Policy decision in extension department needs to have experience and knowledge of the farmer need at gross root level. Data in table 5 show the respondents involvement in the department decision making and satisfaction with the present system of assessment in the department. From the data it is revealed that in the study area 10% respondents were involved in policy decision making, while 90% respondents were not involved in the structure of policy determination. It is concluded that most of the respondents were not involved in the creation of policy decision. Extension department has a vast net work of field force including agricultural officer, field assistant and more. The agents are performing duties in various scales under strict formation. Data presented in table 6 exhibits the views of respondents according to present system they perform. Data reveal that 67% respondents were satisfied with the present system of assessment, while 33% were not satisfied with the present system of assessment. It is concluded that most of the respondents were satisfied with the present setup of assessment.

**Table: 5 Respondents distribution on involvement in policy decision making and present system of assessment in the department**

District	Conception		Total	Conception		Total
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Swat	2 (8)	22 (92)	24	15 (62)	9 (38)	24
Buner	6 (10)	52 (90)	58	40 (69)	18 (31)	58
Total	8 (10)	74 (90)	82	55 (67)	27 (33)	82

Source:Field survey, 2012.

### Present organizational structure of extension wing

Organization is a stable system of individuals who work together to achieve common goals through a hierarchy of ranks and a division of labour. Organizations are thus formally established for the explicit purpose of achieving certain goals and these goals to a large extent determine the structure and function of the organization (Rogers, 1995). Agricultural extension organizations are public sector institutions. It can be combined or integrated with other technology transfer functions, as is the case in most commodity development programs; however, most agricultural extension organizations are expected to concentrate on educational function. Table 6 explains the present organizational structure of extension wing. It is evident from that data that 40% were in the view of partial affect of present organizational structure of extension wing, 32% rendered it enormous affective. While 21% were speechless about the statement. A meditative inference was noted in this connection.

**Table: 6 Respondents distribution with the present organizational structure of extension wing**

District	Effectiveness			Total
	To some extent	To great extent	Not at all	
Swat	15 (63)	4 (17)	5 (21)	24
Buner	18 (31)	28 (48)	12 (21)	58
Total	33 (40)	32 (39)	17 (21)	82

Source:Field survey, 2012.

### Transfer and reason of transfer

Extension worker is designated a well-defined job with timely training, technical back stopping and adequate supervision with a great responsibility in his/her area. Sometimes imperative transfer may need for the improvement of capability. The data in table 7 presents the transfer and reason of transfer in the last three years. It is clear from the data the 18% respondents got transfer, while 82% did not get transfer during last three years. Out of transferred respondents, 40%, 47% and 13% were transferred on political, under rule and nepotism basis, respectively. It is concluded from the table data that majority of the respondents did not transfer during last three years.

**Table: 7 Distribution of respondent's on transfer and it reasons**

District	Conception		Total	Reasons of Transfer			Total
	Yes	No		Politically	Under rule	Nepotism	
Swat	5 (21)	19 (79)	24	2 (40)	3 (60)	-	5
Buner	10 (17)	48 (83)	58	4 (40)	4 (40)	2 (20)	10
Total	15 (18)	67 (82)	82	6 (40)	7 (47)	2 (13)	15

Source:Field survey, 2012.

### Demand of departmental labor by political leaders

Agriculture department have different units involving in the improvement of Pakistan economy and agricultural development in the country. Some what these units are suffering by politician pressure and they demand for labor, technicians and some others. Respondents were asked to explain their idea in this regard which is presented in table 8. The data show 11% respondents reported for demand of labor by political leaders, while 89% respondents answered that political leaders did not demand for labor in their department. It is concluded that majority of the respondents rejected the demand of labor by political leaders in their department.

**Table: 8 Distribution of respondents on demand of departmental labor by political leaders**

District	Conception		Total	Structure of demand		Total
	Yes	No		Permanently	Occasionally	
Swat	5 (21)	19 (79)	24	-	5 (100)	5
Buner	4 (7)	54 (93)	58	-	4 (100)	4
Total	9 (11)	73 (89)	82	-	9 (100)	9

Source:Field survey, 2012.

### Performing of duties assigned by immediate boss

Different units are involved in the improvement of crop productivity in agriculture extension department for the dissemination of new technology. Additional duties are performed by the agents who are assigned by the Directors/Administrators at adjacent. The data about this aspect is tabulated in table 9. Findings of the data shows that 73% respondents were performing the duties assigned by their seniors, while 27% respondents were not fulfilling the duties assigned by immediate boss. It is concluded that majority of the respondents were performing the duties assigned by immediate boss in addition to their official duties.

**Table: 9 Distribution of respondents about performing duties assigned by immediate boss**

District	Conception		Total
	Yes	No	
Swat	15 (62)	9 (38)	24
Buner	45 (78)	13 (22)	58
Total	60 (73)	22 (27)	82

Source:Field survey, 2012.

### Behavior of colleagues and Subordinate with respondents

Combination in working ability is a beneficial process extracting spare ordeal which is the aim of friendship and leads towards the better performance of an organization. The data in table 10 show that in the area 94% respondents were co-operated by their colleagues, while 6% respondents were not co-operated by their colleagues. It is concluded that majority of the respondents were cooperated by their colleagues. The same observation were made by Riggs and Beus (1993) stated that the extension agents overall job satisfaction was moderately correlated with their attitudes toward the organization and their colleagues. The data also presents that 89% respondents were co-operated by their subordinates, while 11% respondents were not cooperated by their assistants. It is concluded that majority of the respondents were cooperated by their subordinates.



**Table: 10** Distribution of respondents on general behavior of colleague and subordinate

District	General behavior of Colleague		Total	General behavior of Subordinate		Total
	Cooperative	Non-cooperative		Cooperative	Non-cooperative	
Swat	22 (92)	2 (8)	24	21 (87)	3 (13)	24
Buner	55 (95)	3 (5)	58	52 (90)	6 (10)	58
Total	77 (94)	5 (6)	82	73 (89)	9 (11)	82

Source:Field survey, 2012.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of the study it is concluded that mostly respondents were strongly agreed that the area under their jurisdiction was too large. For lack of promotion in the department majority of the respondents were strongly agreed. Majority of the respondents were agreed that the subordinate work with them in harmony. The knowledge of training staff was not up to mark and majority of the respondents were not involved in the decision making process in the department. Majority of the respondents were satisfied with the present system of assessment. An overwhelming majority of the respondents did not get transfer during last three years and got promotion on legal basis. In the research area some of the respondents also reported for demand of labor by political leaders. Majority of the respondents were performing the duties assigned by their seniors. Majority of the respondents answered for the cooperative behavior of the supervisor, colleagues and subordinate. The study findings as a whole concludes that in the area there were a lot of factors affecting the extension agents services for agricultural development if the area. To overcome the factors affecting the extension agent's services there is a need for efficient utilization of the available resources control area of jurisdiction is necessary, provision of services structure to the agricultural extension agents, involvement in the decision making, and removal of nepotism and political pressure in cases of extension agents transfer if crucial for efficient production of agriculture in the country.

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