

Constraints faced by the scientists in functioning of Agricultural Technology Information Centre (ATIC)



Home Science

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study was to explore the constraints faced by the scientists in functioning of Agricultural Technology Information Centre (ATIC). The sample consisted of 58 scientists working in and associated with ATIC of GBPUAT, Pantnagar located at Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand. Questionnaire technique was used for getting information from the respondents. The outcome of the study revealed that the constraints faced by ATIC manager were insufficient supporting and technical staff, non availability of experts from each discipline, lack of infrastructure facilities, lack of timely availability of funds, lack of contingency grant and diversion of revolving funds of the centre for other uses. Besides this, lack of transportation facility for procurement of inputs (79.31%), non availability of diagnostic lab facilities in ATIC (75.86%), short supply of literature related to technology (72.41%), no remuneration for scientists associated with ATIC (63.79%), clash between duty at ATIC and college (56.89%) and unavailability of separate vehicle facility for field visits (55.17%) were the major constraints experienced by the ATIC scientists while working in the centre.

INTRODUCTION

In an information age, the role of appropriate information package and its dissemination is of crucial significance. It is not enough to generate information but also to ensure that the required information is delivered to the end users at the earliest and with least dissemination loss. The establishment of ATIC has provided such mechanism to serve as a single window delivery system. This 'single window' approach has enabled users to have the required information for the solution to their problems. It facilitates the farmers to have direct access to the institutional resources, available in terms of technology, advice, technology products etc. for reducing technology dissemination losses. It also builds a linkage between the scientists and the technology users and provides mechanism for immediate feedback. But the efficient and smooth functioning of the centre and the extent to which farmers reaped benefits from the centre will also depends upon the ability and proficiency of the scientist and staff deputed at ATIC. Hence, it is always the justified concern of every organization to strive to improve the performance of its employees to increase their efficiency. In organizational set up of ATIC, ATIC manager and associated SMS/ scientists are the backbone to implement the different activities as they work as a bridge between the farmers as well as higher authorities in hierarchy. For effective and efficient working of the ATIC, the problems faced by the scientists in performing their job must be located and necessary solution for such identified problems must be sought, which enable the scientists to achieve better managerial ability and performance to the assigned jobs. Keeping this in view, the present study was undertaken to study the constraints faced by the ATIC scientists in smooth functioning of the centre.

METHOD AND MATERIALS

The present study was conducted in Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand where the ATIC (located at GBPUAT, Pantnagar) has been in operation since 2001. For the selection of sample, a list of scientists working in and associated with ATIC of GBPUAT, Pantnagar was obtained from the centre. There were 70 scientists in the list. All the 70 scientists were contacted personally for obtaining related information but only 58 scientists provided information. Thus, a total of 58 scientists constituted sample for the purpose of the study. Questionnaire technique was used for getting information from the respondents. Frequency distribution and percentage were used for analysis of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background information of the respondents

Nearly half of the respondents (48.27%) belonged to the age group of 46-60 years, had rural background (75.86%) and were deputed at ATIC from last 5-8 years (56.89%). All of them had doctoral degree (100.00%), majority were in the rank of Professor (37.93%) and Associate Professor (32.75%), had more than 15 years of job experience (74.12%) and attended more than eight training programmes (58.62%) during their service period. Regarding disciplines, major chunk of scientists associated with ATIC were from Plant Pathology (25.86%), Plant Breeding (24.13%) and Entomology (12.06%).

Constraints faced by ATIC scientists

The results are categorized in two sections viz. constraints faced by ATIC manager and constraints faced by ATIC scientists.

Constraints faced by ATIC manager

Cursory of **Table 1** reveals the constraints experienced by ATIC manager in smooth functioning of the centre. Insufficient supporting and technical staff was the major problem encountered by ATIC manager in carrying out the activities of the centre effectively. The manager revealed that due to lack of technical staff, the field activities were not carried out adequately. Frequent change of supporting staff and scientists in every 7-8 months was another constraint reported by the incharge that causes hindrance in completing the projects in time. Other constraint reported by ATIC manager was unavailability of experts from all the major disciplines. As per the mandate the ATIC should have subject matter specialists from all the major disciplines. But, it was observed that at ATIC, Pantnagar, there were only seven scientists deputed on regular basis. Out of them, four scientists were from Agronomy department, one from Entomology and two from Extension Education. The ATIC manager elicited that due to the unavailability of subject matter specialists from all the major disciplines, sometimes they were not in a position to attend the farmers/ farm women properly and gave the satisfactory answer of their problems. Delay in release of funds, no provision of contingency grant to run day to day activities of the centre and use of revolving fund of the centre for other purposes by the university were some of the financial problems highlighted by the manager that has hindered the functioning and progress of the centre.

The results coincided with the findings of Chand *et al.* (2009) who reported that delay in release of funds, frequent change of

nodal officer and difficulty in utilizing watershed development fund were the major constraints encountered by the functionaries while implementing the Watershed Development Programme in Tamil Nadu.

Table 1: Constraints faced by ATIC manager

1.	Lack of supporting and technical staff
2.	Frequent changes of supporting staff and scientists
3.	Non availability of experts of each subject at the centre
4.	Lack of timely availability of funds
5.	Lack of contingency grant
6.	Diversion of revolving funds to other uses

Constraints faced by ATIC scientists

Perusal of **Table 2** highlights the constraints faced by ATIC scientists while working in the centre. Majority of the respondents (79.31%) expressed lack of transportation facility which delays in timely procurement of inputs from different research stations. Similarly, non availability of diagnostic lab facility in ATIC (75.86%) and short supply of literature related to technology by the concerned units (72.41%) were other important constraints that have affected the progress of the centre. No provision of remuneration and incentives for the scientists working and associated with ATIC was expressed by more than 60 per cent respondents that has decreased their morale to work or to be associated with ATIC. Further, more than half of the scientists (56.89%) who were associated with ATIC through helpline reported that many a times they have experienced clashes between their duty at ATIC and college. Likewise, 55.17 per cent respondents revealed that due to lack of separate vehicle facility at ATIC, they were not in a position to visit farmer's field regularly.

Table 2: Constraints faced by ATIC scientists

n=58

S.No.	Constraints	f*	%
1.	Lack of transportation facility for procurement of inputs	46	79.31
2.	Non availability of diagnostic lab facilities in ATIC	44	75.86
3.	Short supply of literature related to technology by the concerned unit	42	72.41
4.	No remuneration for scientists associated with ATIC	37	63.79
5.	Clash between duty at ATIC and college	33	56.89
6.	Unavailability of vehicle facility for field visits	32	55.17
7.	Single telephone line	29	50.00
8.	Difficulty in perceiving problem through helpline (telephone)	26	44.82
9.	Lack of demonstration room, exhibition hall, latest equipment in ATIC	25	43.10
10.	Poor condition of equipment	22	37.93
11.	Famers come with inadequate information regarding their problem	21	36.20
12.	Heavy workload	17	29.31
13.	Difficulty in understanding farmers language	15	25.86

*Multiple responses

With regard to helpline service, nearly half of the respondents (50.00%) stated that due to single telephone line, they were not able to serve the large chunk of farming population and satisfy their queries related to agriculture. Difficulty to perceive the exact problem of farmers and farm women through telephone was reported by 44.82 per cent respondents. Besides this, respondents also reported that inadequate infrastructure facilities like lack of demonstration room, exhibition hall, latest equipment in ATIC (43.10%) and poor condition of equipment (37.93%) also creates problem in delivering the advisory services to the farm families. More than one third of the scientists (36.20%) revealed that most of the time the farmers came to the centre with incomplete information or were not able to explain their problem clearly. In such circumstances, it becomes very difficult for them to understand the problem and give the satisfactory answer of their queries. Heavy workload was reported as constraint by 29.31 per cent respondents. The main reason behind this was that the scientists who were assigned duty at ATIC were also over busy in their courses and research activities. Further, more than one fourth of the respondents (25.86%) reported difficulty in understanding the farmer's/ farm women language whenever farmers from different states and areas visit the centre or make the phone calls.

The findings of the study are in line with the findings of Kammar (2003) who reported that cent per cent scientists of ATIC, Dharwad perceived multiplicity of work as a major constraint which was followed by inadequate supply of inputs (88.8%), non-availability of well equipped soil and water testing lab (55.5%), lack of vehicle to visit the field (33.3%), unequipped plant diagnostic facilities at the centre (33.3%), inadequate information provided by farmers (22.2%) and non availability of literature in different languages (11.1%).

Conclusion

Based on the findings it could be concluded that lack of supporting and technical staff, unavailability of experts of each subject and lack of required resources such as transportation facility, infrastructure facility, latest equipment, need based farm literature etc. were some of the major constraints highlighted by the ATIC manager and scientists that has adversely affected the functioning of the centre and inhibited the centre for being successful in every aspect. Therefore, it is suggested that the programme implementers and university authorities should pay attention towards these problems for efficient functioning of the centre.

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