

DEVELOPMENT ORIENTED PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM TO ENHANCE PRODUCTIVITY OF EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract

Performance appraisal is a process of evaluation of job achievements or outcomes of an employee for a fixed period of time with regard to agreed upon job goals in terms of quality and quantity. Even today, the performance appraisal in these organisations is nothing but a confidential rating of the employees by the superiors and used mainly for the purposes of control and decisions regarding promotions and transfers. The traditional appraisal system is management centered rather than employee centered. Can we use the performance appraisal as a tool to development employees' performance rather than a tool of control and finding faults? Yes, such a development approach to performance approach will be employee centered with the aim of helping th employees to improve the performance. The present study was undertaken to design a development oriented performance appraisal system for extension professionals. The study was conducted in the state of Haryana among extension personnel . The existing and desirable performance appraisal climate was assessed using a standardized questionnaire developed for the study namely performance appraisal climate questionnaire. The study reveled that a majority (56.25%)of the respondents in State Department perceived the existing performance climate as below average. In-order to improve the performance appraisal climate the study also designed a development oriented performance appraisal system which has the following steps:

- Step 1 : Identification of key performance Areas (KPAs).*
- Step 2 : Setting goals under each KPA.*
- Step 3 : Identification of critical behavioural attributes for performance.*
- Step 4 : Periodic review of performance.*
- Step 5 : Self-appraisal.*
- Step 6 : Identification of performance factors.*
- Step 7 : Performance discussion.*
- Step 8 : Performance counselling.*

It is hoped that the above development oriented appraisal system if implemented in state department of agriculture it will improve the performance of the extension professionals.

Introduction

Performance appraisal is a process of evaluation of job achievements or outcomes of an employee for a fixed period of time with regard to agreed upon job goals in terms of quality and

quantity. According to the above mentioned definition, performance appraisal involves judgement of a performance or achievement of an employee. The definition also implies that we can measure the achievements or job outcomes of an employee.

Under traditional performance appraisal system(PAS) which is still being widely used in almost all Government organisations, the performance appraisal evokes a feeling of fear, hatred and unpleasantness in the hearts of employees. Even today, the performance appraisal in these organisations is nothing but a confidential rating of the employees by the superiors and used mainly for purposes of control and making decisions regarding punishment. The present study aimed to design an alternative development oriented PAS for the extension personnel

Methodology

The study was under taken in State Department of Agriculture, Haryana (INDIA) and two Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in the state of Haryana (INDIA), which were purposively selected. An exhaustive sample of eight sub-division level and eighteen circle level extension personnel and a random sample of fifty four village level extension personnel were taken from the randomly selected two district units of State Department of Agriculture. Fifteen extension personnel were chosen from each of the two NGOs on the basis of random sampling method. Thus, a total of eighty extension personnel from State Department and thirty personnel from NGOs were selected for data collection through personal interview method.

Results and Discussion

Performance Appraisal Climate

Before developing a development oriented performance appraisal system it is necessary to understand the present performance appraisal climate (PAC). A performance appraisal climate scale was developed on the basis of above twelve dimensions to measure the performance appraisal, climate (PAC) in the organisations

Perceptions of different extension personnel on the PAC twelve dimensions were studied on the basis of their comparative values, using range of their highest and lowest scoring dimension as the basis of inter-dimension comparison. Considering all the scores of the dimensions for both State Department and NGO's extension personnel all together, the range of scores were found as 5.41 to 10.86. The range of scores were then divided into 4 quartiles, i.e. 5.41 to 6.77, 6.77 to 8.13, 8.13 to 9.49, 9.49 to 10.86 and these quartiles were considered as Poor, Below average, Average and Above average, respectively.

The data in Table 1 show the perception of extension personnel with regard to twelve dimensions of PAC.

Table 1. Perception Of Extension Personnel On Different Dimensions Of PAC.

Sl.No	Dimensions of PAC	Extension personnel of State Dept. of Agriculture (n=80)		Extension personnel of NGOs (n=30)	
		Scores	Evaluation	Scores	Evaluation
1.	Participation	5.49	Poor	9.30	Average

2.	Feed back	5.93	Poor	8.97	Average
3.	Employee acceptance	7.09	Below average	8.60	Average
4.	Awareness of PAS objectives	10.86	Above average	10.00	Above average
5.	Clarity of Performance objectives	8.28	Average	9.87	Above average
6.	Criteria relevance	6.36	Below average	8.17	Average
7.	Performance appraisal & salary	5.41	Poor	7.97	Below average
8.	Administrative uses	6.99	Below average	9.87	Above average
9.	Developmental uses	7.96	Below average	9.70	Above average
10.	Reward & support system	5.58	Poor	8.20	Average
11.	Performance standard	8.44	Average	9.30	Average
12.	Superior subordinate relationship	9.46	Average	9.67	Average

Maximum possible score = 15; Minimum possible score = 3

The study revealed that PAC dimensions such as 'participation', 'feed back', 'performance appraisal & salary', 'reward & support system' were rated as poor dimensions in State Department. The dimensions like 'employee acceptance', 'criteria relevance', 'administrative uses' and 'developmental uses' were evaluated as below average while 'clarity of performance objectives', 'performance standard', 'superior-subordinate relationship' were found to be average dimensions for State Department's extension personnel. 'Awareness of PAS objectives' was the only above average dimension in State Department. In case of NGOs, the dimension 'performance appraisal & salary' was rated as below average while 'participation', 'feed back', 'employee acceptance', 'criteria relevance', 'reward & support system', 'performance standard' were grouped as average dimension and rest of five dimensions (Awareness of PAS objectives, Clarity of PAS objectives, Administrative uses, Developmental uses, and Superior-subordinate relationship) were found to be above average dimensions.

The study showed that the 'awareness of PAS objectives' received the highest score by the extension personnel of State Department and NGO. The lowest scoring dimension was 'performance appraisal & salary' (score 5.40) which was followed by 'participation' (score 5.49), 'reward & support system' (score 5.58), 'feed back' (score 5.93) in case of State Department. Extension personnel of NGOs with an average score of 7.97 rated 'Performance appraisal & salary' lowest. Thus, a comparative analysis of PAC between government and non-government organization reveals that latter had a better PAC.

The study reveals that in the state department of agriculture the following four PAC dimensions were found to be at the level of average to above average level, 'awareness of PAS objectives', 'superior-subordinate relationship', 'performance standard' and 'clarity of performance objectives'. It indicates that personnel are well aware about the goals to be achieved by them against which their performance will be appraised and the standard of performance expected to be maintained. People have confidence in their colleagues and superiors. They share their concerns, help and rely on each other. Performance objectives are seemed to be specific in term of quantity, quality and time frame. 'Participation', 'feed back', 'reward & support system', 'developmental uses' were found to be poor in the present study of State Department's PAC. As we know that the above mentioned dimensions are critical for organizational performance from the present study, this is also in conformity with the findings of Mufeed (1998). In a study conducted by Davis (1993) it was found that the appraisal process for extension personnel was having several deficiencies like poor participation, little developmental values and lack of evaluation feed back. This calls for improvement of PAC in the above mentioned dimensions.

Designing of Development Oriented Performance Appraisal System

A development oriented performance appraisal was developed in the study using the following steps as suggested by Pareek and Rao (1981) .

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|-----------------|---|
| Step 1 : | Identification of key performance Areas (KPAs). |
| Step 2 : | Setting goals under each KPA. |
| Step 3 : | Identification of critical behavioural attributes for performance. |
| Step 4 : | Periodic review of performance. |
| Step 5 : | Self-appraisal. |
| Step 6 : | Identification of performance factors. |
| Step 7 : | Performance discussion. |
| Step 8 : | Performance counselling. |

Step 1. Identification Of Key Performance Areas

The key performance areas refer to critical or key functions that contribute to the results expected from an employee for a given period of time. Identification of key performance areas helps to increase role clarity and reduction in role ambiguity. Key performance areas of the extension personnel working at different levels were identified with the help of a schedule developed. All the functions that a role occupant expected to carry out were listed on the basis of literature search and discussions with agricultural scientists, experts and officers of the State Department of Agriculture. KPAs were weighed according to their importance for the role which was measured through frequency of performance and level of performance on a 5 point continuum. For each task mean scores (overall) and rank ordering were worked out, on the basis of which five KPAs for each category of extension personnel were listed. The KPAs identified for different categories of extension personnel are furnished in Table 2.

Table 2: Key Performance Areas of Extension Personnel.

Key performance Areas (KPAs)	According to frequency of performance	According to level of performance	Overall	Rank
	Mean score	Mean score	Mean score	
For village level extension personnel				
1. Identification of problems and needs of farmers	4.20	4.07	8.27	III
2. Visit to group of farmers to communicate technical know how and attending their different problems and queries	4.39	4.44	8.83	I
3. Attending training conducted by subject matter specialists and superiors	4.04	3.69	7.73	V
4. Giving talk to group of farmers	4.61	3.59	8.20	IV
5. Inspiring and motivating the farmers	4.72	3.59	8.31	II
For circle level extension personnel				
1. Supervision and constant professional advice to subordinates to assisting them in getting the message across to the farmers	4.67	4.56	9.23	I
2. Providing technical support to subordinates	4.22	4.22	8.44	II
3. Visit to field to supervise field trials, to communicate technical know how and attending queries	3.78	4.11	7.89	IV
4. Attending training conducted by subject matter specialists and superiors	3.61	3.89	7.50	V
5. Inspiring and motivating subordinates and farmers	4.39	3.83	8.22	II

For sub-division level extension personnel

1.	Organising meeting, training, seminars etc.	3.75	3.75	7.50	III
2.	Conducting training for subordinates to accomplish their tasks and to improve their work performance	4.00	3.58	7.58	II
3.	Providing technical support to subordinates	4.25	4.63	8.88	I
4.	Supervision and constant professional advice to subordinates to assisting them in getting the message across to the farmers	3.65	3.38	7.03	V
5.	Inspiring and motivating people	3.75	3.50	7.25	IV

For extension personnel of NGO's

1.	Identification problems and needs of farmers	3.70	3.43	7.13	II
2.	Visit to field to supervise and arrange different field trials, demonstrations and other extension objectives	3.23	3.42	6.66	IV
3.	Visit to farmers to communicate technical know how and attending their problems and queries	3.76	3.43	7.19	I
4.	Organising farmer's training, meeting seminar etc.	3.90	3.13	7.03	III
5.	Giving talk to group of people	3.67	2.83	6.50	V

It is evident that KPAs and their priority or importance (as indicated by rank) is different for different categories of extension personnel. The identified KPAs were considered to include in the format of development oriented PAS.

Step 2 - Setting Goals Under Each KPA

Once you identify the KPAs, the next step in performance appraisal process is to set different goals or targets for each KPA for a specific time period, say one year. The goals have to be expressed in qualitative as well as quantitative terms Provision was made to include the targets and their achievements for each category of extension personnel separately in the format of development oriented PAS.

Step 3 - Identification Of Critical Behavioural Attributes Needed For Performance

The critical attributes refer to important qualities such as educational qualifications, skills, experiences, mental abilities, attitudes etc., needed by an employee to effectively perform the tasks. For example, the critical qualities needed for field level and supervisory extension staff are : necessary formal training in agriculture, practical skills and experiences in farming and knowledge of modern practices; abilities in group dynamics, human relations and communication skills; basic skills related to management and leadership; values are attitudes such as faith in rural people; commitment to agricultural development; and concern for whole community (Vijayaragavan and Singh, 1997).An understanding and assessment of critical abilities is essential, as it would help in assigning right kind of job to right kind of person. Further, this would help in identifying the areas of training.

Critical Skills For Extension Managers

Extension managers need three types of skills namely technical, managerial and behavioural. The technical skills refer to knowledge of subject matter and local conditions, which involves methods, procedures and techniques. The managerial skills are related to various components of management functions such as planning, organising, staffing, co-ordinating, directing, reporting and budgeting. Behavioural skills are needed to work with others as well to understand self.

The study revealed the following critical attributed (Table 3) needed for different extension personnel based upon checklist method.

Table3. Critical Attributes Needed for Extension Personnel.

attributes	Extension personnel of State Dptt. of Agril.			NGO's
	Critical Village level Mean criticality score	(n=80) Circle level Mean criticality score	Extension Sub-div. level Mean criticality score	Personnel (n=30) Mean criticality score
1. Basic knowledge of local agricultural situation	8.39(1)	8.50(1)	8.38(2)	7.30(2)
2. Knowledge of modern farm practices	7.78(2)	7.56(2)	7.88(3)	7.60(1)
3. Communication abilities (Verbal, Written)	7.30(6)	7.28(4)	7.13(9)	7.16(4)
4. Skills in conducting demonstrations, campaign meeting, etc.	7.22(7)	7.00(6)	7.88(4)	6.43(5)
5. Showing genuine interest in helping farmers	7.57(3)	7.50(3)	6.88(11)	6.43(6)
6. Motivation to influence others	7.04(8)	6.83(7)	7.38(7)	6.00(12)
7. Planning ability	6.50(13)	6.61(11)	7.38(8)	6.03(11)
8. Organising ability	6.70(12)	6.64(10)	7.88(5)	5.75(13)
9. Problem solving ability	7.48(4)	7.17(5)	8.50(1)	7.16(3)
10. Team spirit	7.02(9)	6.28(12)	6.13(15)	6.37(7)
11. Persuasiveness	6.70(11)	6.17(14)	6.63(13)	5.35(15)
12. Initiative	6.48(14)	6.22(13)	6.38(14)	5.70(14)
13. Flexibility and openness	5.83(15)	5.72(15)	6.75(12)	6.23(9)
14. Decision making ability	7.35(5)	6.67(9)	7.50(6)	6.20(10)
15. Willingness to learn from others	7.00(10)	6.78(8)	6.88(10)	6.37(8)

Figures in parentheses indicate ranks

It was planned to include these critical attributes in the format of development oriented PAS

Step 4 – Periodic Review Of Performance

Under traditional system performance review is mostly a one time annual ritualistic exercise wherein the supervisor gives confidential ratings for employees on different items related to the job. However, under development oriented performance appraisal system performance review is a continuous process. It may be done periodically preferably quarterly or half-yearly, apart from the final annual review. The steps in performance review are as follows:

- Self appraisal
- Performance Discussion
- Performance Counselling

Step 5 - Self-Appraisal

Self-appraisal is one of the important components of overall performance appraisal. Self-appraisal under the traditional appraisal system is mostly ritualistic in nature and does not serve any useful purpose. Most of the employees are tempted to give high ratings for their performance under self-appraisal without an objective analysis of performance. This will not help toward employee's growth and development. The objective of self-appraisal according to Rao (1999) is as follows:

- To help an employee to reflect over his overall performance and learn from success and failure, so as to improve his future performance.
- To evaluate one's accomplishments in relation to KPAs and goals.
- To identify the factors that facilitated or hindered performance.
- To identify training and development needs.

When to do self-appraisal? Every employee has to do self-appraisal as a part of final performance review, at the end of performance period. However, if any one has to do an effective self-appraisal he should do several informal self-appraisals periodically. This calls for maintaining an informal record of achievements, factors that contributed towards success or failure, important events and reflections about performance. This will help in final self-appraisal, which has to be done using a prescribed format.

Step 6 - Identification of Performance Factors

Identification of factors which facilitated or hindered performance is an important component of development oriented appraisal system. It should be remembered that these factors should be identified primarily by the appraisee and the supervisor who helps the appraisee in this process. Once these factors have been identified the supervisor should make all efforts to strength the facilitating factors and to remove the hindering factors. The above process will also help the supervisor to know the different situations under which the appraisee has to work and the amount of the hard work put by him. According to Rao (1999) the facilitating or hindering factors can be attributed to self, reporting officer (supervisor), organisation, sub-ordinates and external environment.

Step 7 - Performance Discussion

The traditional system of appraisal does not provide any opportunity for face-to-face discussion between the employee and the supervisor about performance achievements and related problems. An effective appraisal should provide opportunity for performance discussion which is a two way free and frank sharing of views concerning different aspects of performance of employees.

Step 8 - Performance Counselling

Performance counselling refers to the process of providing guidance with concern by a supervisor to an employee in the form of providing feedback, advice, suggestions, and motivation so as to improve the job performance of employees. In the context of performance review, counselling has to be seen with positive attitude. People often think that counselling is needed only for those problematic employees. This is because they equate it with clinical counselling which is needed for mentally ill patients. But performance counselling is needed even when an employee is doing well, because counselling will further improve an employee's

growth. Further, the focus of performance counselling is entire performance rather than specific problem (Rao, 1999).

Format for Development Oriented Performance Appraisal Form

The format for development oriented performance appraisal consisted of the following Six parts: Part-1. Basic information, Part-II. Evaluation of work done, Part-III. Evaluation of critical attributes required for the Job, Part-IV. Performance Analysis, Part-V. Performance Discussion, and Part-VI. Developmental Needs.

Educational Importance, Implications and Application

The study has shown the need for improving the performance appraisal system of extension personnel. Adoption of the development oriented performance system will help to improve the overall organizational climate. This may also enhance job satisfaction and job performance of extension personnel in dissemination of modern farm practices. The development oriented performance appraisal system designed through this study has to be popularized and made available to extension organizations.

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