THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING NEEDS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT WORKERS IN THE VISAYAS

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ABSTRACT

A total of 1,233 staff members of rural development and private agencies in Eastern, Western and Central Visayas served as respondents in determining the socio-demographic profile and in-service training needs of rural development workers in the Visayas. Also, 630 client-respondents from 42 municipalities were interviewed to assess the effectiveness of these workers. Seventy-four percent of the respondents are under 40 years of age, 60 percent are males and 52 percent are graduates of agriculture courses. Majority of them have extension work experience of less than 10 years and receive an average monthly salary of less than ₱700. Fifty-two percent indicated that their service areas cover 1-5 barangays. A significant number of client-respondents rated the rural development workers in their barangays as very effective (32.7%) and moderately effective (49.2%). The rural development workers indicated a need for in-service training programs on agricultural and technical as well as social skills.

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KEY WORDS: Rural development workers. Demographic characteristics. Training needs. Client-respondents. Extension methods. Effectiveness. Visayas.

INTRODUCTION

In a symposium on rural development held at the University of the Philippines at Los Baños on June 23-24, 1977, a number of criticisms were raised against agricultural extension as a system and the individual extension worker. Among the claims is that the agricultural extension system lacks field workers who are equipped with the technical and educational skills needed in the fulfillment of their various roles in the intergrated rural development programs of the government.

To shed more light on the issue pertaining to the needs of rural development workers, this study presents a socio-demographic profile of rural development workers in the Visayas, their in-service training needs and the clientele's perception of their effectiveness in their respective areas.

METHODOLOGY

This research covered three regions in the Visayas, namely: Region VI - Western Visayas, Region VII - Central Visayas, and Region VIII - Eastern Visayas. Fourteen provinces were chosen from the three regions, namely: Iloilo, Aklan, Capiz, Antique and Negros Occidental for Region VI; Cebu, Bohol, Negros Oriental and Siquijor for Region VII; and Leyte, Southern Leyte, Eastern Samar, Western Samar and Northern Samar for Region VIII.

One hundred rural development workers per province for the 14 provinces under study was the target sample size. However, the number of workers did not reach 100 in some provinces such that larger samples were taken from other provinces. A total of 1,233 rural development workers served as respondents and were requested to accomplish prepared questionnaires. The personal interview method was used to gather data from 630 client-respondents who were chosen through the multi-stage sampling technique. All data were gathered from April to August, 1980.

Descriptive statistics such as ranges, percentages and ranks were used in the presentation of data since the study is largely descriptive in nature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Rural Development Workers

Majority of the rural development workers from the different provinces of the Visayas under study are below 40 years of age, with a large proportion falling within the 30 and below age bracket (Table 1). Respondents are predominantly males and married with an average of three children. Most of them finished college and more than one-half obtained the degree of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and related fields.

About one-third has been involved in extension work for at least 4 years while some 17 percent have chalked up more than 13 years of experience in extension activities. Aside from their educational qualification and experience, their basic interest in rural development work is foremost among the reasons of rural development workers for joining their respective agencies. The average monthly salary received by most rural development workers is below ₱700. A large proportion (52.2%) of the respondents disclosed that they cover five barangays or fewer, while 47.8 percent serve more than five barangays. Of this, 9.7 percent cover more than 16 barangays (Table 1).

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of rural development workers in the Visayas in 1980.

Characteristic	Eastern Visayas n = 400		Western Visayas n = 385		Central Visayas n = 448		Total n = 1233	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Age								
30 and below	183	45.8	143	37.1	162	36.2	488	39.6
31 - 40	144	36.0	133	34.5	176	39.3	453	36.7
41 - 50	56	14.0	79	20.5	80	17.9	215	17.4
51 and above	17	4.2	30	7.8	30	6.7	77	6.2
Mean	35.3		35.8		35.0		35.4	
Sex								
Male	240	60.0	224	58.2	280	62.5	744	60.3
Female	160	40.0	161	41.8	168	37.5	489	39.7
Civil Status								
Single	100	25.0	110	28.6	124	27.7	334	27.0
Married	289	72.2	271	70.4	316	70.5	876	71.0
Separated	6	1.5	1	0.3	2	0.4	9	0.7
Widowed	5	1.2	3	0.8	6	1.3	14	1.1

Table 1. Continued . . .

Characteristic	Eastern Visayas n = 400		Western Visayas n = 385		Central Visayas n = 448		Total n = 1233	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Educational Attainment								
College undergraduate	35	8.8	20	5.2	11	2.5	66	5.4
Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and related fields	164	41.0	255	66.2	222	49.6	641	52.0
Bachelor of Science in Education and related fields	84	21.0	48	12.5	82	18.3	214	17.4
Bachelor of Science in Commerce and related fields	36	9.0	23	6.0	35	7.8	94	7.6
Bachelor of Science in Home Economics and related fields	9	2.2	24	6.2	46	10.3	79	6.4
Bachelor of Science in Social Work and related fields	16	4.0	0	0	25	5.6	41	3.3
Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology and related fields	28	7.0	4	1.0	3	0.7	35	2.8
Bachelor of Science in Engineering	13	3.2	6	1.6	4	0.9	23	1.9
Bachelor of Science in Fisheries	10	2.5	3	0.8	9	2.0	22	1.8
Bachelor of Science in Chemistry	1	0.2	0	0	0	0	1	0
Bachelor of Laws and related fields	5	1.2	2	0.5	10	2.2	17	1.4

Table 1. Continued . . .

Characteristic	Eastern Visayas n = 400 No.	Percent	Western Visayas n = 385 No.	Percent	Central Visayas n = 448 No.	Percent	Total n = 1233 No.	Percent
Number of Children								
None	119	29.8	125	32.5	148	33.0	392	31.8
1 - 3	175	43.8	176	45.7	190	42.4	541	43.9
4 - 6	91	22.8	71	18.4	91	20.3	253	20.5
7 or more	15	3.8	13	3.4	19	4.2	47	3.8
Mean	2		3		3		3	
Dialect Spoken*								
Cebuano	183	45.8	47	12.2	448	100.0	678	55.0
Waray	400	100.0	1	0.3	14	3.1	415	33.7
Ilonggo	13	3.2	385	100.0	40	8.9	438	35.5
Tagalog	180	45.0	154	40.0	131	29.2	465	37.7
Kinaray-a	0	0	70	18.2	0	0	70	5.7
Aklanon	0	0	95	24.7	0	0	95	7.7
Others	26	6.5	14	3.6	0	0	40	3.2

*Multiple response

Table 1. Continued . . .

Characteristic	Eastern Visayas n = 400 No.	Percent	Western Visayas n = 385 No.	Percent	Central Visayas n = 448 No.	Percent	Total n = 1233 No.	Percent
Length of Service (years)								
3 and below	133	33.2	79	20.5	123	27.5	335	27.2
4 - 6	125	31.2	104	27.0	143	31.9	372	30.2
7 - 9	69	17.2	69	17.9	65	14.5	203	16.5
10 - 12	30	7.5	43	11.2	43	9.6	116	9.4
13 and above	43	10.8	90	23.4	74	16.5	207	16.8
Mean	3.0		4.0		5.0		4.0	
Monthly Salary (₱)								
500 and below	140	35.0	120	31.2	114	25.4	374	30.3
501 - 900	217	54.2	255	66.2	316	70.5	788	63.9
901 - 1,300	38	9.5	9	2.3	16	3.6	63	5.1
1,301 and above	5	1.2	1	0.3	2	0.4	8	0.6
Mean	602.0		598.5		605.5		603.8	

Table 1. Continued . . .

Characteristic	Eastern Visayas n = 400		Western Visayas n = 385		Central Visayas n = 448		Total n = 1233	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Number of Barangays Covered								
5 and below	147	36.8	251	65.2	246	54.9	644	52.2
6 - 10	164	41.0	98	25.4	148	33.0	410	33.2
11 - 15	31	7.8	6	1.6	23	5.1	60	4.9
16 and above	58	14.5	30	7.8	31	6.9	119	9.7
Number of Municipalities Covered								
5 and below	262	65.5	295	76.6	377	84.2	934	75.8
6 - 10	107	26.8	77	20.0	60	13.4	244	19.8
11 - 15	25	6.2	10	2.6	10	2.2	45	3.6
16 and above	6	1.5	3	0.8	1	0.2	10	0.8

Training Needs of Rural Development Workers

The areas of training needed by rural development workers in the Visayas were identified by the respondents and are shown in Table 2. Almost one-half (42.5%) of them indicated that they want to have technical lessons on production technology. Specific areas of training preferred by the respondents were pest and disease control; rice, root crops, corn, mungo, coconut, vegetable and fruit production; poultry raising; livestock production; forage and pasture management; and veterinary services. A need for training on social technology such as management, community development, social services and government was also specified. The subjects identified included human relations and personnel management, communication skills, conduct of feasibility studies, formulation of project proposals and statistics, program planning, project management, and leadership. Extension methods and techniques, cooperative development, nutrition education and family planning were also reported as particular areas of training needed by the respondents. Other fields which the rural development workers disclosed as necessary for the advancement of their work were environmental technology, cottage industries and fisheries development.

Rural Development Workers' Effectiveness in the Community as Perceived by the Clients

Almost one-half (49.2%) of the client-respondents assessed the rural development workers as moderately effective, about one-third (32.7%) considered them as very effective, while 7.9 percent responded that said workers are ineffective (Table 3).

The reasons for the perceived effectiveness and ineffectiveness of rural development workers were the following:

Reasons for effectiveness:

1. Greater number of clients served
2. Genuine interest in extension work
3. Ability to impart public health information
4. Effectiveness of ways in carrying out assigned tasks

Reasons for ineffectiveness:

1. Passiveness or indifference
2. Change in areas of assignment
3. Wide areas of coverage

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Length of experience in extension activities and the extension approaches employed can be used as criteria to determine the effectiveness of rural development workers. The same criteria were found to be directly related to the occurrence of

Table 2. Training needs of rural development workers in the Visayas in 1980.

Area of Training Needed	Eastern Visayas n = 400		Western Visayas n = 385		Central Visayas n = 448		Total n = 1233	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Production technology	194	48.5	182	47.3	148	33.0	524	42.5
Social technology	140	35.0	138	35.8	135	30.1	413	33.5
Environmental technology	58	14.5	53	13.8	60	13.4	171	13.9
Cottage industries	35	8.8	23	6.6	21	5.0	69	5.6
Fisheries development	22	5.5	19	4.9	15	3.3	56	4.5

Table 3. Rural development workers' effectiveness in the community as perceived by the clients in the Visayas in 1980.

Level of Effectiveness	Eastern Visayas n = 225		Western Visayas n = 180		Central Visayas n = 225		Total n = 630	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Very effective	52	23.1	99	55.0	55	24.4	206	32.7
Moderately effective	132	58.7	55	30.6	123	54.7	310	49.2
Not effective	19	8.4	16	8.9	15	6.7	50	7.9
No response	22	9.8	10	5.6	32	14.2	64	10.2

problems in the implementation of various development projects of said workers. This implies that there is a need for experienced workers and more trainings in the different aspects of extension work to develop effective extension approaches.

The negative attitudes of the clientele toward government projects and programs are probably caused by their low level of education and lack of participation in various community activities. These explain their skepticism in adopting the latest innovations in agriculture. The Farmers' Training Centers and Regional Training Centers for Rural Development, which are now in full operation, should therefore train more clientele so as to change their negative attitudes and to make research findings available to them.

Numerous programs/projects geared toward the improvement of the lives of rural folks have been launched. It is then hoped that such programs can eventually be adopted and impiemented through the strong coordination of different agencies doing rural development work. This will avoid overlapping of responsibilities and uncooperative attitude, and will foster smooth and harmonious coordination. In this manner, all the inputs needed to support the programs/projects can be pooled to meet the expected output.

Poor roads and limited transportation facilities hamper the technicians' movement in the barangays. This results in slow diffusion of new agricultural practices to the farmers through interpersonal communication approach or personal contact. Thus, the cooperation of other agencies responsible for providing good roads and transportation facilities is necessary to speed up rural development.

Since the study showed that most rural development workers covered five barangays or less for only 3 years or shorter, frequent reshuffling of rural development workers should be minimized if not avoided. A project/program which has been started must be carried out to its successful completion before a rural development worker is transferred to a new place of assignment. In this way, the ineffectiveness of the rural development workers attributed to the frequent change in their areas of assignment can be rectified.

Training programs attended by rural development workers in the Visayas generally need improvement. This is evident in responses such as "not fully attained", "not very effective", "not very satisfactory", "not very adequate" and "not very efficient", to post-training evaluation questions on the objectives of the training, training methods, management and operation, topics discussed, and resource persons; respectively. These findings indicate the need for training managers and administrators who will improve the conduct of training programs by ensuring the selection of suitable and adequate topics, efficient resource persons and effective training methods.

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