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Research Article

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A study of physical and administrative factors affecting working efficiency of agricultural EFS in Pishin district of Pakistan

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Abstract

The responsibility of Extension Field Staff (EFS) is to disseminate information about new technology and teach farmers how to use it successfully to increase their production and income. This sort of responsibility is educational in nature. However, extension personnel are also mandated to disseminate information and encourage the application of this information to solve specific problems. This means that the extent of adoption of new technologies by the farming community depends upon the working efficiency of agricultural EFS. Therefore, their working efficiency has direct bearing on agriculture production. The present study was planned to determine the physical and administrative factors affecting the working efficiency of agricultural EFS in district Pishin. Data for the study was collected from 100 respondents including Deputy Directors of Agriculture (DDAs), Agriculture Officers (AOs) and Field Assistants (FAs) of Agriculture Department (Extension wing) working in Pishin district of Balochistan. Data showed that all (100%) respondents were above illiteracy level while 70% of the respondents were belonged to rural area. The data regarding satisfaction of physical facilities showed that less than fifty (43 and 44%) of the respondents were not satisfied with residential and transport facilities respectively while 50, 45 and 37% of the respondents were satisfied about the area under supervision, provision of the agriculture literature and office location respectively. The data further showed that majority (80%) opined lack of promotion in the department while 20% opposed it. Whereas great majority (90%) agreed that knowledge of training staff is not upto the mark. The data regarding unconcerned duties by the supervisors revealed that more than fifty (55%) of the respondents reported that they were never given any unconcerned duty by their supervisors while *25*% disclosed the assigning of unconcerned duties as sometimes.

Keywords: Agricultural EFS, working efficiency, physical & administrative factors, Pishin.

Introduction

Agriculture is performing a double role in Pakistan's development by feeding population and supporting economic growth by restricting imports of food items. On the other hand, agriculture is the major source of foreign exchange earnings for the country. It's a key sector of the economy as it also provides raw materials to main industrial units of the country and major share of our exports also come from agriculture. It accounts for 20.9% of GDP and 43.5% of employment and has direct and indirect linkages with other sector of the

economy and plays significant role in socio-economic development of the country (Govt. of Pak., 2015). In spite of such a great importance, the yield of our crops is generally low as compared to other countries. There is a huge gap between the potential and actual yield of major crops. (Govt. of Pakistan, 2003). This low yield may be attributed to non-adoption of the latest agricultural technologies and poor farm management by farmers (Farooq *et al*., 2007, Rehman *et al*., 2011 and Aziz *et al*., 2016)).

Agricultural extension is a unique service, which helps to provide small farmers and the rural poor living in remote areas an access to the latest technology; while it can also provide these populations with services to increase their productivity (World Bank, 2003 and Ali *et al*., 2016). Agricultural extension also served as a channel through which farmers' problems can be identified for research and modification of agricultural policies to benefit the rural communities (FAO, 2002 and Abbas *et al*., 2009). Agricultural extension workers are important as they promote the adoption of new agricultural technologies (Ahmad *et al*., 2007).

Extension personnel have the task of bringing scientific knowledge to farm families. Agricultural extension worker thus is an educator and communication agent. Extension workers are responsible for the identification of farmers' problems and production constraints. They work closely with subject matter specialists and research workers. Extension workers responsibility is to disseminate information about new technology and teach farmers how to use it successfully to increase their production and income. This sort of responsibility is educational in nature. However, extension personnel are also mandated to disseminate information and encourage the application of this information to solve specific problems (Ahmed *et al*., 2009). This means that the extent of adoption of new technologies by the farming community depends upon the working efficiency of agricultural EFS.

The extension services provided by agricultural EFS play an important role in agricultural development and can contribute to improving the welfare of farmers and other people living in rural areas (Ahmad *et al*., 2014). But agricultural extension services in Pakistan are facing number of problems. One of these factors is the physical and administrative factors that affect the extension services provided by agricultural EFS. Keeping the above views, the present study was designed to determine the physical and administrative factors that affect the working efficiency of agricultural EFS in Pishin district of Balochistan.

Methodology

This study was conducted in Pishin district of Balochistan province (Pakistan). Out of three hundreds of total population, One hundred respondents were selected randomly. Out of 100 selected respondents, 2 DDAs, 21 AOs and 77 were FAs of Agriculture Department (Extension Wing). The data were collected with the help of pre-tested interview schedule and statistically analyzed with the help of SPSS and thus drawn conclusions.

Results and Discussion

A. Background information of the respondents

It was thought that factors like respondents' education, age, domicile, service experience and farming experience may affect their responses; therefore it was deemed necessary to collect the background information.

a) Educational level of the respondents

Education can be defined as the process of developing knowledge, wisdom, other desirable qualities of mind, character and general competency, especially by a service of formal instruction. Hence education is considered very important in the use of innovation to increase agricultural production. The data were collected in this regard, which are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to their level of education

Status	No.	%age
Matric	68	68
F.A.	11	11
B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture	2	2
M.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture	19	19
Total	**100**	**100**

The data presented in **Table 1** revealed that large majority (68%) of the respondents had Matric, (19%) had M.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture, (11%) had F.A. and (2%) had B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture. It showed that (100%) respondents were above illiteracy level.

b) Age of the respondents

Some studies indicate that age of the respondents played a major role in determining the adoption behavior and use of information on agricultural technology. It is an essential fact that maturity comes with the advancement in age of an individual. The data regarding age of the respondents were collected and presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents according to their age composition

Age	No.	%age
Below 30 years	40	40
30-45 years	52	52
Above 45 years	8	8
Total	**100**	**100**

The data presented in **Table 2** revealed that large majority (52%) of the respondents were in the age group (30-45). A reasonable number i.e. (40%) were below 30 years of age. However, only 8% wore found above 45 years.

c) Residential background of the respondents

It was assumed that background of agricultural field staff affects their working efficiency. The researcher, therefore, thought it necessary to know the background i.e. residential status of the respondents. The data regarding this aspect were collected and presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents according to their residential background

Age	No.	%age
Rural	70	70
Urban	30	30
Total	**100**	**100**

The data presented in **Table 2** revealed that majority (70%) of the respondents were from rural area while only 30% belonged to urban area. It means that if all the other factors were kept constant, the working efficiency of majority of the respondents (70%) should remain high because of their rural background.

d) Service experience of the respondents

Service experience denotes the number of years spent by individual in working in certain Departments /Organizations. It was assumed that length of service of an individual contributes significantly on his behavior and he knows weak and strong points of the department. It was, therefore, felt necessary to collect the information on this aspect. The data regarding this aspect were collected which is presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Distribution of the respondents according to their service experience

Age	No.	%age
Below 10 years	60	60
10-20 years	29	29
Above 20 years	11	11
Total	**100**	**100**

The data presented in **Table 4** shows that majority (60%) of the respondents had below 10 years service experience. Only 29% had experience ranging from 10-20 years and those above 20 years of service experience were only 11% of the total respondents.

e) Farming practices of the respondents

The experience of research showed that some of the respondents do practical farming in their spare time in addition to their official duties. The researcher thought this experience of respondents may lead to better judgment of farming as well as working problem of agricultural department. It is, therefore, thought necessary to have information whether the respondents were doing/involved in practical farming. The data on this aspect were collected which is presented in **Table 5**.

Table 5: Distribution of the respondents according to farming practices

Age	No.	%age
In the past	60	60
At present	40	40
Total	**100**	**100**

The data presented in **Table 5** revealed that at present 40% of the respondents were engaged in farming in addition to their official duty whereas this percentages was 60% in past. It means that 40% of the respondents were never involved in their own farming.

B. Physical factors

a) Satisfaction of the respondents with the physical facilities

It was assumed that provision of sufficient physical facilities may affect positively the efficiency of Agricultural Officers. So respondents were asked about the extent to which they were provided with the requisite facilities and die data regarding this aspect were collected which is presented in **Table 6**.

Table 6: Distribution of the respondents according to their satisfaction with the physical facilities

Physical facilities	Not satisfied		Least satisfied		Less satisfied		Satisfied		More satisfied		Most satisfied	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Residential	43	43	15	15	10	10	18	18	7	7	7	7
Transport	44	44	20	20	7	7	18	18	6	6	5	5
Location of office	22	22	12	12	7	7	37	37	7	7	15	15
Office stationary	33	33	15	15	26	26	14	14	4	4	8	8
Office furniture	35	35	10	10	27	27	18	18	3	3	7	7
Area under supervision	7	7	12	12	12	12	50	50	6	6	13	13
Provision of agric. literature	9	9	14	14	16	16	45	45	8	8	8	8

The data presented in **Table 6** revealed that less than fifty (43 and 44%) of the respondents were not satisfied with residential and transport facilities respectively. However, 22, 33, 35, 7 and 9% of the respondents were not satisfied with facilities like location of office, office stationery, office furniture, area under supervision and provision of agriculture literature respectively. The data further showed that 50% of the respondents were satisfied about the area under supervision, 45% about the provision of the agriculture literature and 37% about the office location. Tie responses on residential and transport facilities are similar to those reported by Naz (1987), Akhtar (1990), Ahmad (1992) and Zehri (1993). But the responses on area under supervision in this study contradict the results obtained by Akhtar (1990), Ahmad (1992), Hussain (1983) and Gill (1961).

C. ADMINISTRATIVE FACTORS

a) Views of the respondents about statements

Statements which were related to administrative factors may provide the idea of improvement about the factors. So the respondents were asked about the views for statements to know the real situation and collected information regarding this aspect is presented in **Table 7**.

Table 7: Views of the respondents about the statements

Statements	Agree		Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%
AO is visited by EADA/DDA frequently	62	62	38	28
Promotions are lacking in our department	80	80	20	20
Subordinates work with you in harmony	75	75	25	25
Knowledge of training staff is not upto mark	90	90	10	10
Political pressure hinder the administrative/ field work of your field staff	87	87	13	13

Table 7 reflects that majority (62%) agreed with the visit by Deputy Director while 38% disagreed. Majority (80%) opined lack of promotion in the department while 20% opposed it. Whereas 75% agreed with the working harmony with the subordinates while 25% opposed it. The great majority (90%) agreed that knowledge of training staff is not upto the mark. 87% termed the political pressure as hindrance in the working of the staff while only 13% rejected it. One of the main clues got out of this table was lack of promotions. Due promotions process in the department should be accelerated. Provision of due rights can improve the efficiency of the respondents also. The findings on staff training are similar to those found by Drysdalle and Shute (1989), Ogunfidittmi (1986) and Zehri (1993).

b) Assigning unconcerned duties to the respondents by supervisors

Assigning unconcerned duties by the supervisors can affect the working efficiency of extension field staff. So respondents were asked about the unconcerned duties assigned by their supervisor and the data in this regard were collected and presented in **Table 8**.

Table 8: Frequency of assigning unconcerned duties to the respondents by supervisors

Frequency	No.	%age
Often	20	20
Sometimes	25	25
Never	55	55
Total	**100**	**100**

The data presented in **Table 8** revealed that more than fifty (55%) of the respondents reported that they were never given any unconcerned duty by their supervisors whereas *25*% disclosed the assigning of unconcerned duties as sometimes. Only 20% agreed about such like duty as often.

Conclusion

From the results of the study it is concluded that about one fourth of the respondents were highly educated with M.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture degree and no one was less than matric. It shows that they had a reasonable level of understanding and delivering extension messages/programs. It is further concluded that about less than half of the respondents were not satisfied with the residential and transport facilities while 50% of the respondents were satisfied about the area under supervision. The study further concluded that lack of promotion in the department and knowledge of training staff is not upto the mark as reported by majority of the respondents. However, 55% of the respondents reported that they were never given any unconcerned duty by their supervisors.

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