



Impact Assessment of Organizational Stress in Agriculture Sector

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Citation | Zulqarnain Anwar, Zain Rafique, Aamer Amin, and Tahir Mahmood, “Impact Assessment of Organizational Stress in Agriculture Sector”, IJASD, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 1–7, Feb. 2021.

Received | Jan09,2021;**Revised |** Feb 06, 2021**Accepted |** Feb11,2021;**Published |** Feb 15, 2021.

Govt officials of the agriculture department are key persons in pointing out the drawback which causes a decline in overall performance. To do so, a questionnaire was prepared and circulated among officials of the agriculture department. By identifying potential occupational stressors, this exploratory study hopes to close the gap. The researchers also want to examine if the level of role stress that agricultural workers experience is influenced by their employment status (permanent or temporary). Stress has been investigated in connection to concerning variables e.g., gender, age, and marital status. The data was collected in Sep 2020 from 50 temporary and 35 permanent officials. Research shows that temporary officers are more stressed than their permanent counterparts. More than half of the extension workers reported feeling overwhelmed by resource inadequacy. It was observed that stress level increase with age. The married officials were also observed more stressed which may be due to domestic reasons however their temporary status affected their efficiency badly. In the future, researchers should investigate the prevalence of stress in public extension officials and its impact on employee well-being, job satisfaction, and job performance, as well as test and implement the evaluation mechanisms.

Keywords: Implementation of mechanism, Organizational stress, Employment status, Job performance.

Introduction

Agricultural extension has been around for a long time in developing countries like India. According to various studies [1]–[4], agricultural expansion is crucial to the sector's overall growth. Jan et al. (2008)[5][6] claim that most agricultural technologies can't function without a strong extension infrastructure. It has been noted that the public lives in underdeveloped countries.[7], [8]. Many people in India's economy depend on the services provided by the country's few public agriculture extension officers. According to past studies, the public extension system should be enhanced. Few studies have been done to analyze potential barriers, such as role stress among extension officials... So the current study intended to determine the level of occupational stress felt by Punjab government employees, both permanent and temporary [9]. the significance of agricultural extension is emphasized

According to Rohit et al. [10][11], one of the most stressful professions is agricultural extension since it involves working with the lowest clients, mainly farmers. The researchers and policymakers, agricultural research is more significant than agricultural extension, which impacts how resources are allocated in the field. The most common cause of stress among extension workers hinders research-extension collaboration.

Anderson and Feder (2004)[1] discovered that the public extension system worldwide has a few issues that impair the efficiency of extension distributions. Public agricultural extension workers may experience stress as a result of their position.

According to some studies, employees' work performance, satisfaction, and overall well-being are affected by organizational stress. Research on long-term employees has been limited to a few studies, with most studies focusing on temporary workers.

Temporary workers are more likely to be laid off than permanent employees, according to Rigotti et al. De Cuyper et al. (2008) temporary employees were more stressed than their permanent counterparts[12]–[14]. Employees with higher levels of job insecurity, in prior studies, reported lower levels of job satisfaction, worse health, and a lower sense of well-being. Several studies have shown that a person's genetic buildup can influence the development of stamina[15][16]–[18]. Temporary workers' decreased job satisfaction and well-being may be due to a lack of choice or the acceptance of an obligatory contract [19].

According to previous studies, there is a direct correlation between temporary employment and role stress and its harmful repercussions. When the unemployment rate is on the rise, temporary workers are more motivated to do their best work because they have a job at all, [20][21]. [22] temporary workers were more committed, cooperative, and satisfied with their professional development. When temporary workers are treated like full-time employees, they create a greater sense of loyalty and pride in the organization, according to Slattery and colleagues (2008)[23][24][25].

As a result, there has been a lack of accurate description of the role-stressing effect of employment type on the agricultural industry

Temporary and permanent agricultural extension officials may suffer different levels of stress. Female temporary workers who are younger and more educated, as per Selvarajan and colleagues[26], are more content and dedicated to their work. Male temporary employees have negative opinions because of their low position at work.

Public Extension Officials on both a permanent and temporary basis were studied in Punjab, Pakistan, to see how organizational role stress affected them. Agriculture hires officials permanently and hence controls the public extension system. It was decided to construct a "Support to State Extension Programs for Reforms" initiative with the help of the World Bank because of the importance of a public extension system [27]. The initiative was taken in collaboration between Punjab's Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and the provincial authorities [28].

Punjab's Department of Agriculture provided data, both permanently and temporarily, bases. Table 1 shows the sample's characteristics as follows.

Table 1. Sample's characteristics.

| Sr No | Permanent | Temporary | Total | Gender |
|-------|-----------|-----------|-------|-----------|
| 1. | 19 | 34 | 53 | Male |
| 2. | 16 | 16 | 32 | Female |
| 3. | 20 | 26 | 46 | Below 35 |
| 4. | 18 | 16 | 34 | 35-40 |
| 5. | 4 | 3 | 7 | 40-45 |
| 6. | 2 | 7 | 9 | 45-50 |
| 7. | 2 | 1 | 3 | Above 50 |
| 8. | 18 | 22 | 40 | Married |
| 9. | 16 | 12 | 28 | Unmarried |

Of the 85 agricultural extension officers who received the survey, 73 answered it.

Discussion

Resources inadequacy and self-rule distance are two of the most significant stressors for extension officials. It is evident that the government does not have the requisite resources to properly implement extension operations. When it comes to money, this may be seen. An employee's human effort and capacity might be affected by a significant situational limitation, such as a limited supply of resources, according to Bacharach and Bamberger (1995)[29]. It's easy for government workers to lose sight of their duties and obligations when they're under constant pressure. Because of this, the quality of public services suffers and must be adequately addressed.

According to past research, organizations must take accessibility and resource quality into account when determining whether they have enough resources [29]. Resources cannot be considered accessible if they are not readily available to a specific employee at the right time and in the right place. The appropriateness, consistency, and relative advantage of a resource are all factors that go into determining its quality. For the resource to be effective, it must match the requirements of the task [29]. For example, training farmers may be more accessible but personal interactions with farmers may be more effective in encouraging them to avoid burning stubble in their fields. Consequently, officials must find ways to minimize the hardship and discomfort of personal visits to farmers' farms. Consistency is the degree to which a product consistently meets the standards that have been established. For extension personnel, the relative benefit of a resource is its simplicity and ease [30].

It is the second most frequently cited role stressor among government agricultural extension workers (SRD). A "lack of integration between the role and its occupant" is how Srivastav (2016)[27] describes the self-role divide. Another study found that "underutilization of their own judgment, knowledge, and competence" and "lack of freedom in completing extended activities" contributed to their stress levels. As a result, the extension function must be modified to allow for greater flexibility and the use of individual extension workers' discretion and talents.

We discovered that both permanent and temporary public agriculture extension officers experience organizational role stress in their jobs, although to varying degrees. [31]

This study found that temporary workers were more stressed, even though the first two primary role stressors were the same. When it comes to the lack of crucial resources and distance from their professional roles, temporary workers are more concerned. On the other hand, temporary workers, are more aware of their role's gradual decay. For temporary workers, the remark "There is very little chance for personal progress in my function" was particularly alarming because it emphasized the importance of advancement in precarious employment. Those with more power and decision-making authority should be given some

of these tasks. As a way to justify their desire to take on more responsibility, officials in temporary positions who are experiencing role erosion (the second most significant role stressor) make statements such as, "I would like to take more responsibility than I currently have," and "I can do much more than I have been allotted." Since job stress has a negative impact on both creativity and well-being in the workplace, governments should take both characteristics into account. Workers who aren't on a long-term contract shouldn't be expected to execute the same duties as those who are.

They feel unqualified because the knowledge, skills, and training required for these positions are greater than what is provided to temporary workers. Before allocating such responsibilities, required induction training should be provided. A supervisor should be assigned to each new officer even if they are supposed to work autonomously. This person will function as a mentor and explain even the smallest intricacies of their responsibilities. To keep employees up to date in all aspects of their work, job rotation is mandatory. An extension official who completes all of these tasks will have a greater sense of self-confidence and be better prepared to take on more challenging duties.

A part of the digital movement is that all government departments have integrated ICT solutions like e-office, Public Financial Management System (PFMS), Government Electronic Marketplace (GeM), and others to promote efficiency and transparency in government business. This could put older officials under pressure to learn and employ new methods. Role stress was shown to be higher in temporary officials over the age of 45. There is a delicate balance between increasing obligations at home and dwindling pay or job uncertainty.

Both male and female officials reported higher stress levels, which may be due to the combined responsibility of caring for a family and a career that comes with being a woman. The department should implement a flexible work schedule and work from home for female employees. Additionally, extension officers who are married report an increase in their stress levels at work. Public extension officers' are influenced by age, gender, and marital status, but the results are the same in both permanent and temporary work environments.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Stress in organizations, particularly in the public sector, is rising [32]. A number of dysfunctional effects, including physiological and psychological ones, have been revealed by researchers examining role stress, which has serious ramifications for an organization's and individual employees' performance. That's why policymakers in Punjab, were given a wake-up call, which set out to find out how stress may be eliminated.

According to the data, the two most significant role stressors for all extension functionaries are resource deficiency and self-rule distance. Temporary officials are under more pressure than long-term ones. Women and married extension workers were more likely to report significant stress levels at work. Exhaustive research found that temporary authorities suffer rising stagnation and deterioration in their functions. For their part, those in positions of authority have shown a desire to improve their abilities and knowledge to fulfill their duties.

A policy ensuring adequate and acceptable quality resources at the proper time and place is, therefore, necessary for effective extension services. A flexible public extension system should also be considered in implementing national development programs, taking into account regional and time-specific requirements. Extension services will benefit from this ability to adapt.

Precarious workers need more challenging jobs with greater authority and responsibility, and the authorities must do this while considering their abilities, expertise, and experience. An insecure work environment should include monotonous tasks, a lack of accountability, or a lack of participation in decision-making. There is a suggestion to create

required practices such as introduction training programs [33], work rotation, and joining under the supervision of a certain senior official in the department. This can help you feel more comfortable taking on more responsibility and becoming more self-reliant.

To help alleviate some stress levels, the government could offer special training programs for employees, considering the effect of age and gender, and marital status on their work. For female officials, flexible work schedules and the option to work from home should be provided. Effective steps by the government are needed to keep officers' stress levels from rising dangerously and damaging their personal and professional life. Additionally, it is recommended that the impact of role stress on extension officers' job performance and happiness be studied. Research in the future should entail testing and adopting stress-reduction and well-being solutions.

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