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Analysis of political factors affecting working efficiency of agricultural extension field staff in Pishin district of Balochistan

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Abstract

Undoubtedly agriculture contributes a major share to the economy of Pakistan but at present production of various crops is very low as compared to other countries. This reflects an inadequate access of farmers to better farming technology. Extension Field Staff (EFS) is the front line extension workers who have direct contact with the farmers and play an important role in educating and motivating them towards adoption of modern technology. 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 identify the political factors affecting the working efficiency of agricultural EFS in Pishin district. 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 66% of the respondents were of the view that transfers of EFS were made under rules while only 21% of the respondents reported that transfers were made on political ground. The data further showed that majority (62%) of the respondents were performing additional duties along with their official duties while behavior of supervisors with their subordinates was cooperative and helpful as reported by overwhelming majority of the respondents. However, some of the respondents opined that behavior of supervisors was autocratic and negative. The Data regarding promotions showed that most of promotions had taken place under some political pressure while majority (72%) of the respondents opined that the rewards were recommended on the basis of favoritism.

Keywords: Political factors, working efficiency, Extension Field Staff, Balochistan.

Introduction

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the rural population and ensures food availability to rural and urban inhabitants. It is a key sector of the economy as it provides raw materials to main industrial units of the country and also plays a major contribution in export earning of the country. The agriculture sector accounts for 21.04% of GDP and 43.7% of employment (Govt. of Pak., 2014). 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 Pak., 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 and Rehman *et al.*, 2011). In this era of science and technology, per acre yield can only be increased through the adoption of improved production technology by the farming community.

Agricultural Extension is the system of introducing new agricultural techniques and ideas to the farmers for incorporating them into their farming practices. The extension service, therefore, not only informs farmers to improve their lands and prepare a cropping

pattern, but also motivates them to use improved agricultural inputs and adopt modern agricultural practices according to their socio economic status (Ahmed *et al.*, 2007). Department of Agriculture (Extension Wing), Government of the Balochistan entrusted this responsibility to change attitude of the farmers to apprise them about innovations and to convince them to adopt modern agricultural technology.

Agricultural EFS is the front line extension workers who have direct contact with the farmers and play an important role in educating and motivating them towards adoption of modern technology. 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). Therefore, their working efficiency has direct bearing on agriculture production.

Agricultural extension services in Pakistan are facing number of problems in present times. Effectiveness in agricultural extension activities largely depends on the services provided by agricultural EFS (Israr *et al.*, 2013). One of these factors is the political factors that affect the extension services provided by agricultural

EFS. Keeping the above views, the present study was designed to determine the political 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) External political factors

i. Transfer of agricultural EFS

It was assumed that transfer of Agricultural EFS from one place to other place may affect positively or negatively on his working. So the researcher therefore considered necessary to have information whether the respondents were transferred politically, under rule and as disciplinary action. The data were collected in this regard, which are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Reasons for transfer of agricultural EFS from the date of appointment

Reasons	No. of respondents	% Age
Politically	21	21
Under rule	66	66
As disciplinary action	13	13
Total	100	100

The data presented in **Table 1** shows that majority (66%) of the respondents were of the view that transfers of agricultural EFS were done under rule. However, there were about 21% of the respondents who reported that transfers were done on political grounds while only 13% of the respondents termed it as disciplinary action. However, some of the under rule transfer may also be politically oriented.

ii. Departmental promotions

It was assumed that political pressure may affect directly departmental promotions of agricultural EFS. So respondents were asked about the extent of effect of political pressure on the departmental promotions. The data were collected in this regard, which are presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents regarding extent of effect of political pressure on departmental promotions

Extent of effect	No. of respondents	% Age
100%	0	0
75%	55	55
50%	17	17
25%	02	02
No effect	26	26
Total	100	100

The data presented in the **Table 2** revealed that 26% of the respondents reported that there is no effect of political pressure on departmental promotions of agricultural EFS. More than half of the respondents assumed that effect of political pressure on their promotion as 75%, less than one fifth termed it as 50% and only 2% of the respondent termed it as 25%. Most of promotions had taken place under some level of political pressure from outside. This might have drastically the efficiency of the deprived respondents due to their frustration. Politically motivated promotions combined with politically motivated transfers might have seriously affected the working

efficiency of the beneficiary respondents also because if they can avail all the benefits without hard work then why should they work in the future.

iii. Additional duties

It was assumed that additional duties assigned to the respondents decrease the working efficiency of the respondents. So the researcher, therefore, thought that it is necessary to collect information regarding this aspect. The data were collected in this regard, which are presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents according to Performance of additional duties

Response	No. of respondents	% Age
Additional duties performed	62	62
Additional duties not performed	38	38
Total	100	100

The data presented in **Table 3** shows that majority (62%) of the respondents performing additional duties along with their official duties while 38% of the respondents did not perform any additional duties. As pointed out by Ahmad (1992) multiple duties influence the working efficiency of extension workers, the results shown above give clear indication of low working efficiency of extension workers in the study area.

b) Internal political factors

i. General behaviour of Supervisor with their subordinates

Behavior of supervisor with their subordinates do affect directly or indirectly on the working efficiency of extension workers in good and bad sense. The data were collected in this regard, which are presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Extent of behaviour of supervisors with subordinates

Behaviour	Extent of behaviour								Total	
	Always		Often		Sometimes		Never			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Cooperative	44	44	35	35	17	17	04	04	100	
Helpful	40	40	45	45	08	08	07	07	100	
Autocratic	-	-	06	06	35	35	59	59	100	
Negative	-	-	-	-	09	09	91	91	100	

The data presented in **Table 4** revealed that the behavior of supervisor with his subordinates was cooperative and helpful as reported by overwhelming majority of the respondents. However, some of the respondents opined that behavior of supervisors with their subordinates was autocratic and negative.

ii. General behaviour of colleagues

It was assumed that behavior of colleagues may affect the cooperation and interest of the respondents about his work. The data were collected in this regard, which are presented in **Table 5**.

Table 5: Extent of behaviour of colleagues

Behaviour	Extent of behaviour								Total	
	Always		Often		Sometimes		Never			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Cooperative	60	60	40	40	-	-	-	-	100	
Non-cooperative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

The data presented in **Table 5** shows that all (100%) of the respondents reported that the behavior of their colleagues with them was cooperative. Behavior of the colleagues was always cooperative according to 60% of respondents while 40% reported it as often cooperative. The almost similar results were made by Israr *et al.* (2013) who reported that 94% of the respondents in the study area were cooperated by their colleagues.

iii. General behaviour of subordinates

It was assumed that behavior of subordinates may affect the implementation of information and team work. The data were collected in this regard, which are presented in **Table 6**.

Table 6: Extent of behaviour of subordinate

Behaviour	Extent of behaviour								Total	
	Always		Often		Sometimes		Never			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Cooperative	50	50	35	35	15	15	-	-	100	
Non-cooperative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

The data presented in **Table 6** shows that all (100%) of the respondents reported that the behavior of their colleagues with them was cooperative. Behavior of the subordinates was always, often and sometimes cooperative as reported by 50, 35 and 15% of the respondents. The researcher did not receive anything regarding non-cooperation about the subordinates with the respondents. It means that the respondents and the subordinates were enjoying a friendly relation. This might had a positive impact to the working efficiency. The almost similar results were made by Israr *et al.* (2013) who reported that majority (89%) of the

respondents in the study area were cooperated by their subordinates.

Reward criteria

Reward of any good work may promote the interest of the respondents in their working. The researcher, therefore, thought that it is necessary to collect information about the criteria adopted by reporting officer for their subordinates. The data were collected in this regard, which are presented in **Table 7**.

Table 7: Perception of the respondents regarding criteria for reward adopted by reporting officer

Response	No. of respondents	%age
Excellence performance of duty	28	28
Favoritism	72	72
Total	100	100

The data presented in **Table 7** shows that only 28% respondents reported that criteria adopted by the reporting officer for recommending reward for their subordinates was excellence in performance of duties. But majority (72%) of the respondents opined that the rewards were recommended on the basis of favoritism. This shows that reward system is unfair. It further supports the information regarding the political involvements in the promotion of officers. Negligence of the excellent performance in the department had further made worst the efficiency of the respondents.

Conclusion

From the results of the study it is concluded that most of the promotions of EFS were made on political grounds while more than half of the respondents assumed that 75% effect of political pressure on their promotions. The behavior of supervisors with their subordinates was cooperative and helpful as reported by overwhelming majority of the respondents. Data further showed that the behavior of the EFS was cooperative and helpful among themselves. Similarly the subordinates and the officers were enjoying cordial relationship among themselves. However, 72% of the respondents opined that the rewards were recommended on the basis of favoritism.

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