



Analysis of economic factors affecting working efficiency of agricultural extension field staff in Pishin district of Balochistan (Pakistan)

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Abstract

Agriculture extension services provided by Extension Field Staff (EFS) play a vital role in increasing agricultural production and improving living standard of farming community. 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. Therefore, their working efficiency has direct bearing on agriculture production. The present study was planned to determine the economic 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 revealed that 56% of the respondents were of the view that Travelling Allowance (T.A) and Daily Allowance (D.A) was paid after above six months while only 5% of the respondents reported that T.A. & D.A was paid in time. The data further showed that nearly half (52%) of the respondents said that inputs for demonstration plots were provided by the department in time while majority (60%) of the respondents were not satisfied with their pay. Data regarding promotion of the respondents showed that 86% of the respondents complained for their late promotion. The main reason may be bureaucratic hurdles in the way of promotion. However, 30% of the respondents were of the view that their promotion was due while 70% of the respondents reported that their promotion was not due.

Keywords: Economic factors, affecting, working efficiency, Extension Field Staff.

Introduction

Agriculture is central to economic growth and development in Pakistan. Being the dominant sector it contributes 21.4% to GDP, employs 45% of the country's labour force and contributes in the growth of other sectors of the economy. The healthy expansion in agriculture stimulates domestic demand for industrial goods and other services and supplying raw

material to agro-based industry (Govt. of Pak., 2013). In spite of such a great importance, agriculture is developing at a very low speed in Pakistan (Rehman *et al.*, 2013) and average per hectare yield of various crops in the country is much lower than that obtained in various countries in the world (FAO., 2004). There is also 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 hectare 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 (Ahmed *et al.*, 2007). The effective extension services can help in the adoption of new agricultural technologies which can leads to higher crop yields and more household incomes (Khan *et al.*, 2006 and Ali, 2013).

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.

Effectiveness in agricultural extension activities largely depends on the services provided by agricultural EFS (Israr *et al.*, 2013) but agricultural extension services in Pakistan are facing number of problems. One of these factors is the economic factors that affect the extension services provided by agricultural EFS. Keeping the above views, the present study was designed to determine the economic 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

Payment of T.A. and D.A. to the respondents

It was assumed that regular payment of T.A. and D.A. may have a good effect on the interest and working of extension workers. The researcher, therefore, thought to know about the payment of T.A. and D.A. The data were collected in this regard, which are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Perception of the respondents regarding payment of T.A and D.A

Time taken for payment	No. of respondents	%age
In time	05	05
After one month	26	26
After three months	04	04
After six months	09	09
Above six months	56	56
Total	100	100

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that only 5% of the respondents reported that T.A. and D.A. was paid in time whereas more than 56% of the respondents complained that T.A. and D.A. was paid after more than 6 months time. Nine percent revealed that payments are made in six months, 26% termed it as after one month. Only 4% said we received it after three months.

Supply of fertilizer, seeds, and pesticides for demonstration plots by the department.

The main objective of demonstration plots is that all the innovations and recommendations are put into practice under the guidance and supervision of the extension personnel. Demonstration plots help much in convincing farmers about the value of various

recommendations and ultimately lead to great extent, in positive decision making. Demonstration plots are very strong tools that generally motivate the farmers

towards adopting the recommendations. The data were collected in this regard, which are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents regarding supply of fertilizer, seeds, and pesticides for demonstration plots by the department

Supply of inputs	No. of respondents	%age
Provided	52	52
Not provided	48	48
Total	100	100

The data presented in the Table 2 shows that nearly half (52%) of the respondents said that the inputs for demonstration plots were provided by the department in time, and another half (48%) of the respondents confirmed the supply of inputs which was not provided to them by the department in time.

Satisfaction of the respondents with their pay

Pay may affect the interest of the respondents in working and it may affect directly the working efficiency of the respondents. The researcher therefore thought to know about the satisfaction of pay of the respondents. The data were collected in this regard, which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents regarding satisfaction with their pay

Response	No. of respondents	%age
Satisfied	37	37
Not satisfied	63	63
Total	100	100

Table 3 reflects that 37% of the respondents were satisfied with their pay. While 63 % were not satisfied with their pay. The main reason of satisfaction was that most of them were posted in their own areas. They may have been supplementing their incomes by performing other activities/duties such as own farming in addition of their official duties. The other category i.e. 63% were less satisfied because of their posting in the far flung areas from their native villages.

Time taken for promotion of respondents

It was assumed that timely promotion of the respondents may increase the working efficiency of the respondents. Hence the information regarding promotion of the respondents were collected and the data in this regard, which are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Perception of the respondents regarding time taken for promotion

Time taken for promotion	No. of respondents	%age
In time	14	14
Late	86	86
Total	100	100

The data presented in Table 4 revealed that 86% respondents complained for their late promotion in the department. However, 14% of the respondents reported that their promotion was in time. The main reason may be bureaucratic hurdles in the way of promotion. Naz (1987) also reported that lack of timely promotion is one of the difficulties confronted by die extension workers and it has negative impact on their performances.

Position of promotion of the respondents

It was assumed that in time promotion of the respondents may positively affect the working efficiency of the respondents. So respondents were asked about the position of promotion of the respondents in the department and the data in this regard, which is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of the respondents regarding position of promotion

Time taken for promotion	No. of respondents	%age
Due	30	30
Not due	70	70
Total	100	100

The data presented in Table 5 shows that promotion of 30% of the respondents was due and was not effectuated due to one reason or another. However, 70% of the respondents reported that their promotion were not due. These results are comparable with the results of Table 4.

Conclusion

From the results of the study it is concluded that majority of the respondents reported that T.A. and D.A. was not paid in time while nearly half of the respondents argued that the inputs for demonstration plots were provided by the department in time. It is further concluded that 86% of the agricultural EFS complained for their late promotion in the department whilst 63% were not satisfied with their pay.

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