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Study on occupational stress among the veterinary officers of Karnataka

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Abstract

As veterinarian plays a vital role in livestock development, it could be necessary to understand their working style and there occupational stress. Considering this, a study has been conducted to assess the occupational stress among the Veterinary Officers of Karnataka. Samples of 240 Veterinary Officers were selected to collect data from the four divisions of Karnataka (Bengaluru, Mysuru, Belagavi and Kalaburagi). Data were collected with a structured interview schedule and was analysed using appropriate statistical tools. It was revealed that majority of the Veterinary Officers (60.4%) experienced medium level of job stress, while only 20.4 and 19.2 per cent of them experienced low and high level of job stress, respectively. On perusal of details of the stress, it can be noted that average percentage mean score was 53.22 indicating a medium level of job stress. Some of the common reason for stress was work difficulty, lack of cohesiveness among staff, role ambiguity, constraints of change in rules and regulations, work overload, etc.

Keywords: Occupational, veterinary officers of Karnataka, livestock development

1. Introduction

Traditionally, animal husbandry has been a part of agriculture since from many ages. Almost two thirds of rural households are engaged in livestock farming along with agriculture practices. It plays an important role in poverty alleviation and overall socio-economic development of the rural community. Veterinary Officers are the main stakeholder in development of animal husbandry and play vital role for livestock development in another perspective as well. They have been primarily entrusted with the responsibility of performing the activities such as disease investigation, vaccination, de-worming, artificial insemination, infertility treatment, pregnancy diagnosis, gynecological treatment, surgical treatment, awareness programme etc. Besides, these Veterinary Officers implement the development programmes introduced by the government at the grass root level. Thus, availability of quality animal support services is largely dependent upon the job performance of Veterinary Officers. Success of any organization depends on the commitment of its human resource, bringing about their individual developments and ensuring their satisfaction (Aydogdu and Asikgil, 2011) [1]. When an employee feels the environment to be stress free and is satisfied with his job, he tends to work with commitment and gains positive performance.

Stress is the result of lack of fitness within a person in terms of personality, aptitude and ability and his environment wherein he is unable to cope with the constraints or demands encountered (Harrison, 1976) [4]. Stress in life can originate from one's job, organization and society or from within one's self. In an organizational context, human behavior depends on several factors which can be physical, social and psychological. The key to understanding the integration of an individual with an organization is the role assigned to him within the overall structure of the organization. The success of the department in fulfilling its task depends on the involvement of these staff and their effective performance. A stress free work environment is to be established wherein highly job satisfied staff would exert themselves for the growth and performance of the organization.

Keeping these facts in mind a study was undertaken keeping the grass root Veterinary Officers as the focal content of the study with the following objectives.

2. Material and Methods

2.1. Location of the Study

The present study was conducted in the state of Karnataka. The sample respondents were selected from the four administrative divisions of Karnataka state, viz, Bengaluru, Mysuru,

Belagavi and Kalaburagi.

2.2. Population and Sample

All the Veterinary Officers (VOs), Senior Veterinary Officers (SVOs) and Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) working in the department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Service, Government of Karnataka, formed the population of the study. Out of this 240 respondents including all the before mentioned cadre officers from all the four divisions of Karnataka, namely, Bengaluru (61), Belagavi (57), Kalaburagi (62) and Mysuru (60) were selected using proportionate random sampling method.

2.3. Job stress

Kahn and Quinn (1976) defined job stress as anything about an organizational role that produces adverse consequences for the individuals. It was operationalized as the degree of stress physically or mentally a respondent is experiencing while attending day to day departmental jobs. This was measured by using the scale developed by Singh (1989) with slight modifications. The scale consists of 10 dimensions to measure organizational job stress. Out of these, three dimensions, which had no direct relationship with the measurement of organizational job stress in the present study, had been dropped out.

Finally, it is the 18 statements scale in which each statement is rated on a five point continuum scale i.e., strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. Scoring was done as 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 for positive statements and reverse scoring for the negative statements. The maximum and minimum scores that could be obtained by the respondent were 90 and 18, respectively. The VOs were classified into three categories of low, medium and high job stress on the basis of class interval method. The categories were as follows.

Category	Score
Low	18 to 42
Medium	43 to 60
High	61 to 90

2.4. Statistical Analysis

The collected data was analysed by using Mean, frequency, percentage, class interval method, Multinomial Logistic Regression and Garret Ranking Techniques.

3. Result and Discussion

Job stress contained five dimensions namely, work difficulty, lack of cohesiveness among staff, role ambiguity, constraints of change in rules and regulations and work load with six, four, two, four and two items respectively. Average percentage mean score of job stress (Table 1.1) was to the extent of 53.22 per cent. Under work difficulty dimension, the item 'job either administrative or technical is quite difficult and stressful' was perceived stressful with percentage mean score 83.8 per cent. It was ranked second in overall ranking. 'Running the hospital and conducting camps without adequate medicine' was perceived as stressful with a percentage mean score 77.5 per cent and this was ranked sixth in overall stressors list. Likewise, visiting emergency cases during night hours and treating wildlife occasionally was perceived as stressful with percentage mean score of 41.3 per cent and 37.7 per cent respectively. With regard to lack of cohesiveness among staff dimension, 'lack of sufficient number of staff to carry out the work' was the only item perceived as stressful (Mean score (MS) 82.8%) and this was ranked third in overall stressors list. On the positive side 'Cooperativeness of subordinates' (MS = 40.8%), 'receiving incompatible requests from two or more people (MS = 32.0%) and 'support of colleagues and superiors towards work (MS = 31.1%) were perceived as less stressful with overall ranks of 10th, 15th and 17th respectively. With respect to role ambiguity 'lack of clarity in others expectation from his/her job' (MS = 46.8%) and 'abilities not matching to the requirements of job' (MS = 36.1%) were ranked eight and twelfth respectively and perceived as less stressful. Prolonged procedures for handling the job' (MS = 80.9%) and 'poor availability of facts and information to perform the work' (MS = 68.8%) were two major stressors with respect to rules and regulations. These two items were ranked fourth and seventh in the overall rank. However, 'organization's policies and procedures being fair to all the employees' (MS = 34.6%), 'policies and regulations becoming limitation to the alternative solutions open to oneself' (MS = 32.3%) were perceived less stressful and were ranked 13th and 14th respectively. Pressure from the seniors to speed-up the job' was the most stressful issue for the VOs (MS = 94.0%). This was ranked first among all the stressors. Likewise, 'lack of time to complete the assignment' was another stressor with respect to work load (MS = 78.0%). This was ranked fifth in overall ranking.

Table 1: Ranking of job stress items by the respondents based on self-rating technique

Sl. No.	Statements	Mean Score (%)	Rank
A. Work difficulty			
1.	Job assignments either administration/technical is quite difficult.	83.8	2
2.	Compulsion to run the hospital and conduct camps without adequate medicine.	77.5	6
3.	Strain and risk of visiting emergency cases during night hours	41.3	9
4.	Challenges in treating wild.	37.7	11
5.	Assignment without adequate resources and materials to execute it.	31.4	16
6.	Compulsion to do things that should be done differently.	28.1	18
B. Lack of cohesiveness among staff			
7.	Lack of sufficient number of people to carry out the assignment.	82.8	3
8.	Cooperativeness of sub-ordinates.	40.8	10
9.	Receiving incompatible requests from two or more people.	32.0	15
10.	Support of colleagues and superiors towards work.	31.1	17
C. Role ambiguity			
11.	Clarity of what others expect from ones job.	46.8	8
12.	Mismatch of self-abilities with the requirements of the job.	36.1	12
D. Constraint of change in rules and regulations			
13.	Prolonged established procedures for handling various situations arising on the job.	80.9	4

14.	Availability of enough facts and information to work to the best.	68.8	7
15.	Organization's policies and procedures being fair to all the employees.	34.6	13
16.	Policies and regulations becoming limitation to the alternative solutions open to oneself.	32.3	14
E. Work overload			
17.	Pressure to speed up ones job very often.	94.0	1
18.	Lack of enough time to finish one's assignments.	78.0	5
	Average per cent mean score	53.22	

Table 1.2 revealed that majority of the VOs (60.4%) experienced medium level of job stress, while only 20.4 and 19.2 per cent of them experienced low and high level of job

stress, respectively. Statistical analysis show no significant difference between divisions with respect to job stress.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on the extent of their job stress in Bengaluru, Belagavi, Kalaburgi and Mysuru divisions

Category	BLR		BGM		KLBG		MYS		Overall		p value
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	
Low (18 to 42)	12	19.7	10	17.6	13	20.9	14	23.3	49	20.4	0.1193
Medium (43 to 60)	45	73.7	34	59.6	35	56.5	31	51.7	145	60.4	
High (61 to 90)	4	6.6	13	22.8	14	22.6	15	25.0	46	19.2	
	61	100.0	57	100.0	62	100.0	60	100.0	240	100.0	

These findings are in line with the study conducted by Girija *et al.* (1994) [2] where, she studied on Job satisfaction and job stress of Agricultural Officers in found that 24 per cent of AOs in Karnataka experienced low level of stress, 53 per cent of them were in medium level while, 23 per cent of them were found in the high level of organizational job stress. Sandika (2006) [8] also found a similar result on job stress in a study on Organizational climate perception by Veterinary Officers and Veterinary Livestock Inspectors of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Service, Karnataka. The results were also in agreement with results of Manjunath (2004) [6], Ratnayake (2012) [7], and Goyal *et al.* (2015) [3], who also reported that majority of the respondents experienced medium level of job stress.

The veterinarians in the field are supposed to perform multiple roles – clinician, extension worker, administrator, trainer, friend and philosopher to a farmer, facilitator for an entrepreneur, etc. Sometimes the demands of the client system and other stakeholders may not match the skills of the vet may be the reason to end up in stress creation among veterinarians.

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