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Study on different sources of stress of Krishi Vigyan Kendras functionaries in Odisha

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Abstract

Stress has become a pervading feature of people's life in modern world. Random sampling was employed to select the sample of 16 KVKs from the overall 33 KVKs. Total enumeration (census method) was used for data collection. A total of 80 respondents were selected. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from the sample respondents using mailed questionnaire. It is observed that majority of the sample respondents (55%) conflicting demands at home and work is the only personal factor of stress. The study clearly depicts that the main economic reason for stress was insufficient salary (61.25% contact). The majority of the respondents who acknowledge task related factors like a poor welfare activity which was favored by 70.0% and in the context of role demand of the respondents to the extent of 70. It is observed that poor leadership was the cause for stress for 42.5% of the respondents.

Keywords: personal factors, economic factors and psychological factors, task demands, role demands, interpersonal demands and organizational culture

1. Introduction

Stress has become a pervading feature of people's life in modern world. Despite tremendous advancements in science and technology, and remarkable growth of economy and sources of luxury, people all over the world seem to experience stress in various spheres of their lives whether, it is in the family, business organization, enterprise, institute or any other social or economic activity. Right from birth till death, an individual is invariably exposed to various stressful situations.

Stress in the workplace is a growing concern in any part of the world, where employees increasingly face conditions of overwork, job insecurity, low levels of job satisfaction and lack of autonomy. Workplace stress has been shown to have a detrimental effect on the health and well-being of employees, as well as a negative impact on workplace productivity and profits [1]. Currently, agricultural sector accounts for almost 60 and 65 percent of aggregate work force in India and the state of Odisha respectively [2]. This clearly indicates large number of workers is deployed in this sector. As a means of bridging the gap between farming community and the research wing in agriculture as well as providing vocational education in agriculture and allied fields to the farming community, the government of India (GOI) through the Indian Council of Agricultural research (ICAR) decided to establish agricultural science centers by the name Krishi Vigyan Kendras in 1974. Currently there are about 694 K.V.Ks in the whole nation including 33 in Odisha state [3].

2. Material and Methods

A comprehensive list of all the K.V.Ks operating under O.U.A.T. were collected from the Directorate of Extension Education and a total of sixteen (16) K.V.Ks were selected randomly for studying stress management practices of their functionaries. Based on the preliminary survey and the list obtained from the Directorate of Extension Education, it was identified that the maximum staff strength of a K.V.K is 16. Taking the small human resource capacity of the KVKs during the study time in to consideration, total enumeration (census method) was used for data collection. Finally, the first 80 respondents were considered to be the constituents of the research sample. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from the sample respondents using mailed questionnaire. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation were used to summarize and analyze the data on identification of stress level of functionaries.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Different sources of stress for the sample respondents

Stress is the result of a number of reasons. As far as stress of an individual is concerned,

it can be caused by internal and external sources. Internal sources/stressors originate from within the individual and may range from psychological factors (negative thoughts, individuals perceptions, feel of inadequacy etc) to personal problems such as relationship and family issues. On the other hand, external sources or environmental stressors are conditions beyond an individual’s control and generally includes economic and job related issues.

Stress management will be very much perfect, accurate, clear and effective when the source is known to the person who tries to manage the stress or reduce it to manageable level. In this context an attempt was made to identify the different

sources of stress for the Krishi Vigyan Kendra functionaries. Sources were viewed from two dimensions; from the individual him/her self (Personal factors, Economic factors and psychological factors) and from the KVK (task demands, role demands, interpersonal demands and organizational culture).

As internal sources of stress are somewhat personal in nature, encompasses factors relating to personal life, family issues, and personality characteristics etc. The K.V.K functionaries under study also suffer from stress due to certain kind of personal factors and information in this regard which is collected by the scholar is presented in the table give below.

Table 1: Personal factors associated with stress of the respondents

A	Personal Factors	Yes		No	
		Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Marital difficulties	11	13.75	69	86.25
2	Breaking of relationships	6	7.5	74	92.5
3	Large family size	10	12.5	70	87.5
4	Discipline troubles with children	9	11.25	71	88.75
5	Conflicting demands at home and work	44	55	36	45
6	Lack of support for domestic problems at work	38	47.5	42	52.5
7	Work place being far from home/family	46	57.5	34	42.5

It is observed in the above table that out of seven personal factors, conflicting demands at home and work is the only personal factor inform of internal source of stress which is endorsed by majority of the sample respondents to the extent of 55%. At the same time 57.5% of respondents are under stress as they are working at a faraway place from their home and family ^[4].

The reason may be due to the fact that most of the KVKs are situated in a relatively far distance from urban areas to look the farming community from a close range. It was hypothesized that distance will be one of the main reasons for employee’s stress and as narrated above it was the prime cause. Functionaries have to travel far distance and even under certain circumstances they stay in their work place for several days. This made KVK employees worry about family

issues. In contrast, due the positive role of the norms and values of the community in making marriage ties strong, the great respect of children to their parents and the manageable family size, issues like breaking of relationships, large family size and children’s indiscipline had minimal stress effect.

3.2 Economic factors

Economic uncertainties create huge instability in people’s life and for many individuals it is a source of stress. Insufficient salary is the main economic problem leads to havoc in the day to day life of workers.

This research study tried to explore the economic factors which cause stress to the KVK functionaries. The data is depicted in the figure below.

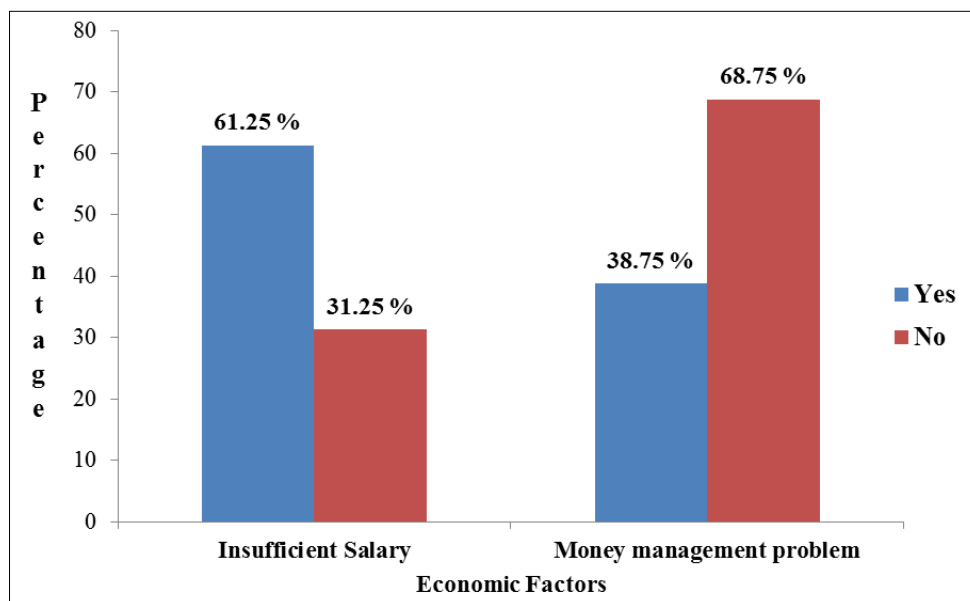


Fig 1: Economic factors associated with stress of the respondents

The above Figure clearly depicts that the main economic reason for stress is insufficient salary (61.25% contact)

followed by money management problems which accounts for 38.75% of the respondents ^[5].

The reasons are because of the fact that sufficiency or deficiency in the context of income or earning in the form of salary is a relative matter which in turns influence by good or bad management of the income. But the fact remains that K.V.K functionaries are not happy with the monthly salary, expecting much more satisfying the proverb "Human wants are unlimited", applies very much to K.V.K functionaries.

3.3 Psychological factors

Stress itself use psychological issue. Hence, other related psychological factors matters a lot in the context of

accelerating or retarding stressful situation for an individual irrespective of whether he/she is at home or at work place. So no matter how well a social, physical, economical or the very environmental condition in which the individual exist, it cannot facilitate a conducive atmosphere alone for an individual to work in stress free mind. In this context it is pertinent to probe inside further in finding out the finer stand linked with other negativity of mind, unrealistic expectation, low self confidence etc.

The studied psychological factors as sources of stress are presented in the table given below.

Table 2: Psychological factors associated with stress of the respondents

Sl. No.		Yes		No	
		Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Negative thoughts/perceptions	9	11.25	71	88.75
2	unrealistic Expectation	14	17.5	66	82.5
3	low self confidence	20	25.00	60	75

As revealed from the above table No. 2, it is very much evident that the respondents of the study K.V.Ks districts don't subscribe very much to none of the three identified factors of psychological nature which is no doubt a good indication that agricultural extension functionaries understand and learned not to give room for negative thought to crop up in their mind and expect something in a very unrealistic manner without developing one's own self confidence for the purpose. No doubt this information is quite interesting and encouraging to note down but at the same time the underlying fact which may be attributed to these situations is that the educational background, experience, exposure of the respondent functionaries are very much refined, fine tuned and oriented towards serving the client in missionary mode and consequently developing a kind of self satisfaction by way of rendering need based and demand driven services to the different client systems at the state level [6].

3.4 Organizational factors for stress

There is no shortage of factors within an organization that can cause stress to the employees. Organizational policies (unfair and arbitrary performance reviews, rotating work shifts,

inflexible rules, unrealistic job description etc), organizational structure (centralization, lack of participation in decision making, little opportunity for advancement, great amount of formalization etc), unpleasant physical conditions in the organization (crowding and lack of privacy, safety hazards, excessive heat or cold and the like) and organizational processes (poor communication, poor/inadequate feedback about performance, inadequate information etc) put the functionaries under certain level of stress.

The research scholar tried to identify the organizational elements responsible for causing stress over the functionaries of the Krishi Vigyan Kendras, which is presented in the subsequent tables given below.

3.4.1 Task demands

In organizational context the task job which is assigned to KVK functionaries as per the mandated activities of KVK can speak volumes about stress proneness of the functionaries. The different aspects of the given task which account for creating stress for the functionaries are presented in the table given below.

Table 3: Task demand factors associated with stress to the respondents

Sl. No.	Task demand factors	Yes		No	
		Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Demanding and insensitive boss	27	33.75	53	66.25
2	Monotonous, under-estimating, less Important task	35	43.75	45	56.25
3	Task variety	42	52.5	38	47.5
4	Unpleasant tasks	32	40	48	60
5	Adverse tasks	30	37.5	50	62.5
6	Over crowded working room	35	43.75	45	56.25
7	Noise and constant interruptions	26	32.5	54	67.5
8	Poor welfare activities	56	70.00	24	30
9	Repetitive work	51	63.75	29	36.25
10	Tight deadlines	36	45.00	44	55

It is observed in the above table that majority of the respondents who acknowledge task related factors like poor welfare activities, repetitive work and varieties of assigned task as top three stress creating factors which are favored by 70.0%, 63.75% and 52.5% of the respondents respectively. Similarly the top three factors which are not considered as stress creating factor by majority of the respondents are noise and constant interruptions, demanding and insensitive boss

and adverse tasks to the tune of 67.5%, 66.25% and 62.5% of the respondents respectively [7].

The reasons which may be attributed for the situation are KVKs being positioned at a distant place from the university head quarter don't allow them to enjoy amenities as available in state capital. With regard to welfare of the employees, at times it is not adequate whatever little being extended from the university year after year in general and season after season in particular. The activities of KVKs observed to be

routine type in nature without much novelty and creativity reflected in it. Undertaking such kind of repetitive activities allowing the functionaries to feel disgusted and consequently a negative attitude towards the routine work sometimes develop. Furthermore, activities at K.V.K level are somewhat complex in nature and demanding information with administrative, managerial, supervisory and field work type input which don't allow any functionaries to concentrate properly over the assigned activity and therefore, diverting and diluting their mind and heart from the job.

Similarly the least stress creating factors for KVK functionaries at the country side as identified in the study may be due to the fact that KVK functionaries' functions according to the guidelines prescribed in the KVK manual which makes the boss quite sensitive and non – demanding for staff working down the line. Since everything is performed as per the mandates of K.V.K where questions of averse task rarely arise. Therefore, it may be safely concluded that stress arising out of assigned task is not very much significantly under KVK system.

3.4.2 Role demands

These demands refer to pressures placed on a person as a function of the particular role he/she plays in the organization where he/she works. Role conflicts create expectations that may be hard to reconcile or satisfy. Role overload is experienced when the employee is expected to do more than time permits. Role ambiguity is created when role expectations are not clearly understood and the employee is not sure what he or she is to do.

As far as this research project is concerned, the situation and nature of job was different for different categories of the K.V.K functionaries. Some were Subject Matter Specialists, Program coordinators, training assistants, supporting staff, drivers etc. and these categories fulfill varied roles in their respective K.V.Ks.

Therefore, the researcher has made an attempt to identify if the different aspects of role demands cause stress to the functionaries and the result is displayed in the following figure.

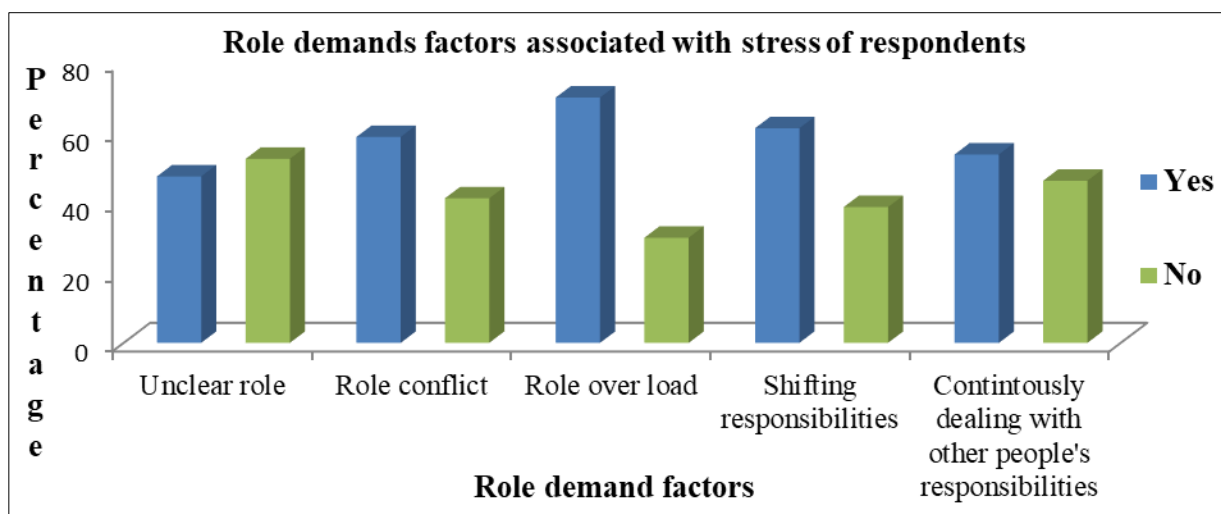


Fig 2: Role demand factors associated with stress of respondents

From the above figure it is revealed that in the context of role demand, role over load, shifting of responsibility and role conflict are three important factors as considered by majority of the respondents to the extent of 70%, 61.25% and 58.75% respectively [8].

As discussed earlier, at times, K.V.K functionaries overloaded in relation to their capacity due to other top – down plans and programs of the national government as well state government assigned to this functionaries under RKY, NHM, NFSM as well as NLP linked with agricultural and allied fields. Shifting of responsibility as a factor of stressful situation caused in K.V.K as in many K.V.Ks good number of posts are laying vacant on account of some reasons over which the K.V.K administration doesn't have any control. Accordingly limited staff members, trying to fulfill all the mandates of K.V.K

creates a situation for shifting responsibility by one to another.

In some K.V.Ks newly recruited staff members suffer from the problem of role conflict due to inappropriate orientation and induction training given to them before or soon after their joining in K.V.K system.

3.4.3 Interpersonal demands

This is a pressure created by other employees. Lack of social support from colleagues and poor interpersonal relationships can cause stress, especially among employees with a high social need. Regarding the KVK functionaries here are some of the interpersonal demands which causes stress over the employees.

Table 4: Interpersonal demand factors associated with stress to the respondents

Sl. No.	Interpersonal Demands	Yes		No	
		Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (F)	Percentage%
1	Inadequate, inconsiderate and unsupportive supervision	18	22.5	62	77.5
2	Poor relationship with co-workers	10	12.5	70	87.5
3	Bullying, harassment, violence	8	10	72	90
4	Isolated or solitary work	14	17.5	66	82.5
5	No agreed procedures for dealing with problems	29	36.25	51	63.75
6	Lack of promotional avenue	61	76.25	19	23.75

From the above table it is observed that lack of promotional avenues is the most significant demand on the part of the functionaries creating stress to them in KVK set up. There are ample reasons for it out which the most important is the nature and terms of appointment which is by large contractual in nature developing a kind of fear psychosis above their sustainability in the present job. Hence, when they are not very much sure on the present position, their entry to K.V.K automatically raised a lot of questions in their mind about their future promotion and hence creating a smoky atmosphere which is very much stressful for them ^[9].

Table 5: Organizational culture factors associated with stress to the respondents

Sl. No.	Organizational Culture	Yes		No	
		Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (F)	Percentage%
1	Poor communication	33	41.25	47	58.75
2	Poor leadership	34	42.5	46	57.5
3	Lack of clarity about organizational objectives and structure	32	40	48	60

Table 5 depicts that poor leadership was the cause for stress for 42.5% of the respondents followed by poor communication (41.5% contact) and lack of clarity of organizational objectives and structure (40% contact) ^[10].

Generally speaking organizational culture was not the cause of stress for more than 2/3 of the respondents which indicates the KVKs have good organizational culture.

4. Summary and Conclusion

Based on the descriptive statistics, most of the respondents were in medium stress level. Further in the analysis it was indicated, most of the respondents were manifested with cognitive, emotional, behavioral and physical symptoms which categorized them in medium stress level. As part of the analysis the respondents under both high and low level of stress were few in number.

According to the data analysis on identification of sources for stress, the personal factors; conflicting demand at home and work and distant location of workplace were the leading causes of stress for the KVK functionaries. Besides, the data confirmed that the main economic reason for stress was insufficient salary followed by money management problems. On the other hand, results of the identification of psychological factors as sources of stress indicated that most of the KVK functionaries didn't complain of psychological factors as sources of their stress.

With regard to organizational factors as source of stress, the result of the analysis showed that task demand factors; poor welfare activities, repetitive work and varieties of assigned task were the leading top three stress creating factors. It was further indicated that role demand factors like role over load, shifting of responsibilities and role conflict were the three important factors considered as sources of stress by the sample respondents. In addition, in the organizational domain, lack of promotional avenue as the main interpersonal demand is the prime source of stress for the KVK functionaries. In contrary, generally speaking organizational culture was not mentioned as source of stress by majority of the respondents. Stress awareness training programs, workshops, seminars, symposium and other related activities should be organized in certain time interval. Welfare facilities should be provided to the level of the KVK organization or other related agencies. Evaluation of KVK activities may be developed.

5. Acknowledgement

First of all, I bow my head with reverence and gratitude to the

3.4.4 Organizational Culture

The atmosphere in any organization is a big deal for the smooth functioning and productivity of the workers and of course ultimately the organization. An organization with unpleasant working culture will automatically put the employees in uneasy situation.

Here, this research project has attempted to identify stressors to the KVK employees from the organizational culture point of view and the finding is presented below.

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