

Research Article

An Empirical Study on Quality of Work Life among Farmers with Reference to Ranga Reddy District, Telangana State



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe and explore factors which may influence the quality of life of farmers and to examine the rating values by farmers toward environmental factors affecting their quality of life. Farmers who are continuously involved in farming after experiencing a disabling condition are considered as value respondents for the study. The descriptive-exploration design of this study was based on survey research. A questionnaire was developed and utilized. Two constructs were analyzed based on social demographic questions and external environmental factors. There was a potential population of 120 farmers in Ranga Reddy district of Telangana state. The sampling technique selected under study is a convenience sample of farmers who participated in agricultural meetings, conferences, and extension programs. A total of 220 farmers completed the quality of life survey. Of which, 120 samples are taken for the purpose of this research paper. Having this background will enable agencies and educators to develop educational programs and organize appropriate training materials to meet farmers' needs. Overall, all farmers showed a need for programs related to stress management, getting enough sleep, and balancing farm work with family life during their busy season.

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INTRODUCTION

Quality of life refers to the level of happiness or dissatisfaction with one's surviving. Those who enjoy their life are said to have a high quality of life, while those who are unhappy or whose needs are otherwise unfilled are said to have a low quality of life. Quality of life is viewed as an alternative to the control approach of managing people. The quality of life approach considers farmers as an asset "to the farming rather than as costs." It believes that farmers perform better when they are allowed to participate in managing their farming and make decisions. This approach motivates people by satisfying not only their economic needs but also their social and psychological ones. To satisfy the new-generation challenges in farming, farmers need to concentrate on utilizing technology during cultivation and organization of farming work. Further, today's farmers are realizing the importance of relationships and are trying to strike a balance between career and personal lives.

MAJOR CHALLENGES OF FARMERS

Small and fragmented land-holdings

The seemingly abundance of net sown area of 141.2 million hectares and total cropped area of 189.7 million

hectares (1999–2000) pales into insignificance when we see that it is divided into economically unviable small and scattered holdings.

The average size of holdings was 2.28 hectares in 1970–1971 which was reduced to 1.82 hectares in 1980–1981 and 1.50 hectares in 1995–1996. The size of the holdings will further decrease with the infinite sub-division of the land holdings.

Seeds

Seed is a critical and basic input for attaining higher crop yields and sustained growth in agricultural production. Distribution of assured quality seed is as critical as the production of such seeds. Unfortunately, good quality seeds are out of reach of the majority of farmers, especially small and marginal farmers mainly because of exorbitant prices of better seeds.

Manures, fertilizers, and biocides

Indian soils have been used for growing crops over thousands of years without caring much for replenishing. This has led to depletion and exhaustion of soils, resulting in their low productivity. The average yields of almost all the crops



are among the lowest in the world. This is a serious problem which can be solved using more manures and fertilizers.

Irrigation

Although India is the second largest irrigated country of the world after China, only one-third of the cropped area is under irrigation. Irrigation is the most important agricultural input in a tropical monsoon country like India where rainfall is uncertain, unreliable, and erratic. India cannot achieve sustained progress in agriculture unless and until more than half of the cropped area is brought under assured irrigation.

Lack of mechanization

In spite of the large-scale mechanization of agriculture in some parts of the country, most of the agricultural operations in larger parts are carried on by human hand using simple and conventional tools and implements such as wooden plough and sickle.

Soil erosion

Large tracts of fertile land suffer from soil erosion by wind and water. This area must be properly treated and restored to its original fertility.

Agricultural marketing

Agricultural marketing still continues to be in a bad shape in rural India. In the absence of sound marketing facilities, the farmers have to depend on local traders and middlemen for the disposal of their farm produce which is sold at throw-away price.

Scarcity of capital

Agriculture is an important industry, and like all other industries, it also requires capital. The role of capital input is becoming more and more important with the advancement of farm technology. Since the agriculturists' capital is locked up in his lands and stocks, he is obliged to borrow money for stimulating the tempo of agricultural production.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The fundamental principles for agricultural sustainability in developing countries as summarized by Pretty, Smith, G., Goulding, K.W.T., Groves, S.J., Henderson, I., Hine, and R.E. & Walter, C (2008)^[1] are as follows:

- Optimum land use efficiency and productivity;
- Maximum use of internal resources, and minimal use of non-renewable resources;
- Profitable and efficient production, with an emphasis on maximum net farm income;
- Maintenance of natural resources that support agricultural production; and
- Maximum use of locally appropriate farming practices and natural resource conservation strategies.

Lewis *et al.* studied on the extrinsic and intrinsic determinants of the quality of work life (QWL). The objective of the research was to test whether extrinsic or intrinsic or prior traits test predict satisfaction with QWL in health care.

The variables used extrinsic traits: Salary or other tangible, intrinsic traits: Skills, level, autonomy, and challenge, and prior traits: Gender and employment traits, co-workers, support, supervisor, treatment, and communication. The survey was conducted in seven different health care, and respondents were 1,819/5486 staff (33%). Data were gathered from the circulate questionnaire, and test applied for data analysis was regression method and factor analysis. The findings showed pay, supervisor style, commitment, and discretion; all play a role in determining QWL. Female employees were less satisfied with these traits than males.^[2]

Khodadadi *et al.* investigated the QWL dimensions effect on the employees' job satisfaction. In this study, independent variables were permanent security providing, salary and benefits payment policies, development and promotion opportunity, and job independence, and job satisfaction as the dependent variables. 114 employees selected randomly for this study and two questionnaires of "QWL" and "job satisfaction" were used for data collection, and data analysis was done using SPSS and LISREL software. The results of the study showed that the salary and benefits' policies have a significant and positive effect on Shuhstar's Shohola Hospital employees' job satisfaction.^[3]

Mohammadia and Shahrabib conducted a research on relationship between QWL and job satisfaction, and it is an empirical investigation. Questionnaire in Likert scales format and distributed among 86 full-time employees of two governmental agencies in Iran, supreme audit court and interior ministry and *t*-test used to examined the hypothesis. The results indicated that different working components have significantly influenced on job satisfaction.^[4]

Nia and Maleki studied on the relationship between QWL and organizational commitment of faculty members at Islamic Azad University under 127 faculty members with a sample size of 97 subjects through random stratified sampling. Spearman's correlation coefficient, multiple correlation method, LISREL, and Friedman test were used for data analysis. The *t*-statistic and Fisher statistic are applied to measure the demographic variables. Result showed that there is a positive relationship between the QWL and organizational commitment and it means that organization commitment is the result of high QWL.^[5]

Sorabsadri and Goveas studied on sustainable QWL and job satisfaction among employees engaged in the freight forwarding and clearing house in Mumbai, and observation was observed through data collection, and Chi-square was used for the data analysis. The results showed in this study that different factors of QWL such as safe and healthy working conditions, adequate and fair compensation, opportunity to utilize individual skills and talent, develop human capabilities, provide career, and growth opportunities vary according to the employees' perception and job satisfaction depending on the way of perceived the dimensions of QWL.^[6]

Research methodology

Research design

This study used a "cross-sectional survey" research designed to identify the quality of life among farmers that might influence their life, living conditions, and satisfaction.

Data for this study were collected from a predetermined population (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993).

Samples of the study

The samples of this study consisted of 120 farmers in agriculture sector actively participating in farming activities at Rangareddy district, Telangana. This district was selected, keeping in mind that it is well endowed with resources. For the purpose of comparison of perceived quality of life of farmers in agriculture sector. A total of 220 farmers completed the quality of life survey. Of which, 120 samples are taken for the purpose of this research paper. A non-probability, proportionate quota sampling was used for the study.

Research instrument

Data for this study were collected using a questionnaire consisting of seven rating scale and are presented in two sections: Section A (socioeconomic information of farmers selected under study) and Section B (identified environmental factors influencing quality of life among farmers).

Objectives of the study

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- To present sociodemographic profiles of farmers in general available in the selected area under study in agriculture industry.
- To identify the major environmental factors that influence the quality of life among farmers.
- To suggest the measures to improve the quality of life in the agriculture industry.

Period of the study

The study was conducted for 3 months from November 2017 to January 2018. The respondents were contacted and interviewed in the agriculture lands at the time of their work in field during their work hours.

Collection of data

For collecting the data, the respondents were contacted individually and given a brief description about the nature and purpose of the study. For the convenience of the respondents, the statements were translated into vernacular language so that the respondents could give their response with ease.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is discernible from Table 1 that the largest majority of the sample respondents, i.e., 36.7% were 45–54 years which was followed by the age group of 35–44 years (23.3%), 45–54 years (20%), between 25 and 34 years (16.7%), and below 25 years (3.33%). The below figures indicated that majority of the sample farmers were in the middle-age group who had sufficient experience of farming with various cultivation seasons.

Table 1 shows demographic factors such as gender, farm size, type of farming, farm commodities, and net income from farm. From the result values, it is depicted that 91.7% of respondents are male, 100% of respondents do full time farming actively, 45% of respondents shared that they have 1–3 acres and 4–7 acres farm size equally, whereas 51.67% of respondents do field crops as farm commodities. 33.33% of respondents said that they earn income from field which is between Rs. 75000 and 1 lakh.

Table 1: Socioeconomic information of the respondents

Sociodemographic profile	Frequency (%)
Age (in years)	
Below 25	4 (3.33)
26–34	20 (16.7)
35–44	28 (23.3)
45–54	44 (36.7)
Above 55	24 (20)
Gender of respondents	
Male	110 (91.7)
Female	10 (8.33)
Type of farming status	
Full-time farm	120 (100)
Part time farm/seasonal work	0 (0)
Farm size	
> 1 acre	12 (10)
1–3 acres	54 (45)
4–7 acres	54 (45)
Farm commodities	
Field crops	62 (51.67)
Vegetables, fresh	52 (43.33)
Vegetables, processing	28 (23.33)
Fruit	4 (3.33)
Miscellaneous	34 (28.33)
Net cash from farm income	
<Rs. 25000	2 (1.67)
Rs. 25,001–Rs. 50,000	12 (10)
Rs. 50,001–Rs. 75,000	28 (23.33)
Rs. 75,001–Rs. 1,00,000	40 (33.33)
Above Rs. 1,00,001	38 (31.67)

Table 2 describes different factors which should be considered under environment constraints determining quality of life among farmers in selected areas of Rangareddy district in Telangana. It has been rated in 7 rating scale. The scale consists of high negative affect (1), medium negative affect (2), low negative affect (3), no affect (4), low positive affect (5), medium positive affect (6), and high positive affect (7). Mean score of the above factors is 3.28. From the above analysis, it is inferred that environment factor for the farmers are effected at low negative affect in the above factors by the farmers in selected areas of agriculture sectors.

Table 2 indicates the degree of correlation between quality-life among farmers and the environmental factors. Quality life among farmers has negative relationship with weather affect during the seasonal period (−0.745) and time management skills affect your quality of life (−0.719), i.e. when the level of quality life among farmers becomes lower, with all other factors such as machinery breakdowns affect your quality of life (0.722), diseases (animal and plant) affect your quality of life (0.715), market prices for agricultural products affect

Table 2: Environment factors determining quality of life among farmers

I	Environment factors	Correlation	Significant
1	Weather affects during the seasonal period	-0.745	0.000
2	Machinery breakdowns affect your quality of life	0.722	0.000
3	Diseases (animal and plant) affect your quality of life	0.715	0.000
4	Market prices for agricultural products affect your quality of life	0.503	0.000
5	Costs for agricultural equipment affect your quality of life	0.681	0.000
6	Input costs affect your quality of life	0.512	0.000
7	Time management skills affect your quality of life	-0.719	0.000
8	Financial pressure affects your quality of life	0.615	0.000
9	Government regulations affect your quality of life	0.604	0.000
10	Eligibility for government programs affects your quality of life	0.783	0.000
11	Environmental Protection Agency regulation affects your quality of life	0.612	0.000

Sources: Primary data. *Correlation is significant at the 0.01% level (2 tailed)

your quality of life (0.503), costs for agricultural equipment affect your quality of life (0.681) and input costs affect your quality of life (0.512), financial pressure affects your quality of life (0.615), government regulations affect your quality of life (0.604), eligibility for government programs affects your quality of life (0.783), environmental protection agency regulation affects your quality of life (0.612), and quality life among farmers has a positive relationship.

The results of the correlation analysis also reveal that quality life and all the environment factors selected for the study are significantly correlated. Hence, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis of and state that there is a significant correlation between quality life and environment factors identified for the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

To minimize the differences in quality of life between farmers, extension and public health professionals may develop educational intervention to maintain physical health, social relationships, support, and increase participation of farmers with disabilities in the educational programs to promote a better quality of life. For example, programs could focus on farm financial management, women's life satisfaction in rural areas, stress management for farmers and their families, and health intervention for farmers with a disability or other health issues. Almost 50% of farmers are not aware of health issues they reported.

Based on the findings of this study, farmers with disabilities have more challenges to continue farming than those farmers who do not have health issues. Farmers with disabilities work less hours a day and gain less income, while farmers who have not experienced disability are able to work more intensively in busy season and gain more income. As a result, disabled farmers had a negative outlook on life because they experienced health issues and more stress than other farmers.

It is important about farmers' perceptions and feelings regarding external-environmental aspects affecting their quality of life. The subjective indicators of farmers' quality of

life affected by external environmental factors might be a basis for assessing real problems facing farm society. Understanding external environmental factors that affect a farmer's life might lend assistance to objective assessments to determining priorities, strategies, and resources for farm development. Having this background will enable educators to develop educational programs and organize appropriate training materials to meet the farmers' needs

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