

A STUDY ON SOCIO-PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VETERINARY OFFICERS IN RAJASTHAN STATE

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SUMMARY

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the socio-personal characteristics of veterinary officers (VOs) in Rajasthan state. A sample size of 140 VOs was selected from seven districts i.e. Ajmer, Bharatpur, Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota and Udaipur districts. Majority of the respondents (VOs) belonged to middle age group (36-51 years, 60.71%), possessed B.V.Sc. & A.H. degree (57%), male (81%), married (97%), government service (71%) and farming (19%) as their parental occupation, rural family background (42%), low category (63.57%) of training received, posted in rural area (52%), short category (up to 31 km away place of posting from residence (73.57%) and medium category (52.86%) of service experience in AHD. State government needs to pay more attention to clear departmental backlogs, conduct fresh recruitments, make promotion policies, organize advanced trainings and provide basic facilities and subordinates staff in veterinary institutions.

Keywords: Animal husbandry, Socio-personal characteristic, Veterinary officer, Rajasthan

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INTRODUCTION

Animal husbandry plays an important role in overall socio-economic development of the rural community. Animal husbandry supports agriculture and serves as farmer's unfailing friend even in seasons of drought. The profitability and rural sustainability through livestock can be achieved by minimizing health problems. The responsibility of keeping livestock healthier lies not only upon the owners but also to a substantial extent upon the animal husbandry department (AHD), Rajasthan. AHD provides various services such as livestock health care services, breed improvement, conservation of indigenous breeds, scientific livestock production and management, formulation of policies and programmes for animal husbandry and other livestock extension activities. The veterinary officers (VOs) are the key persons at the grass root level to implement the development programmes, working at village level and form a strategy for linkage between the research, extension organizations and the livestock owners. The VOs also act as a counselor and guardian of farmers' animals.

The VOs are not only animal doctors and animal welfare advocates but they are key stakeholders due to their crucial role in reducing global hunger, controlling zoonosis, monitoring food quality and safety, promoting biomedical research and protecting the environment and biodiversity. The VOs also help in changing the outlook

and attitude of livestock owners towards their all-round-betterment. The VOs play pivotal role not only in treatment of animals but also for dissemination of new technology, motivating, convincing the users to accept the same at the earliest necessary for boosting production. They act as the bridge between research laboratories/stations and the livestock owners. They educate, train and persuade livestock owners to adopt new ideas and practices regarding the scientific livestock production.

As an extension worker, the VOs have to do various activities like organizing animal camps, training of livestock owners, calf rallies, women awareness camps, promoting savings among livestock owners, employment generation and disease eradication campaigns. The VOs can be rightly called as a friend, philosopher and guide of the animal owners with respect to their animal related matters.

For successful dissemination of services by the VOs, effective job performance and job satisfaction are required. Several factors such as socio-personal characters, institutional facilities, surrounding environment and job stress etc. influence the job performance as well as job satisfaction of the VOs. The socio-profile characteristics of the VOs constitute the social, psychological, situational and organizational characteristics (Reddy *et al.*, 2020). Thus, this study is an attempt in that direction with an aim to study the socio-personal characteristics of VOs and how these characteristics are influencing their job performance

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and job satisfaction in Rajasthan state.

The present study was conducted in the Rajasthan state comprises of seven administrative divisions i.e. Ajmer, Bharatpur, Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota and Udaipur. One district from each administrative division was selected on the basis of maximum number of VOs posted in the district (Anonymous, 2021). Keeping the criteria into account, Ajmer, Bharatpur, Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota and Udaipur districts were selected. Twenty VOs, who had completed the probation period successfully and currently serving the AHD, Rajasthan at various positions in the veterinary hospitals/institutions, were selected from each selected district with the help of combination of purposive sampling and multi-state random sampling technique. Thus, a total of 140 VOs were selected as respondents. Looking to the guidelines against COVID-19, the data were collected by mailing the well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule directly to them, designed on Google form.

A total of 10 relevant variables were identified as independent variables under the category of socio-personal characteristics of VOs namely age, educational qualification, gender, marital status, parental occupation, background, training received, place of posting, distance of posting from residence and job experience in AHD (in years) for the present investigation. The respondents were categorized into suitable categories on the basis of their socio-personal characteristics (variables) (Table 1).

In the present study, the average age of the VOs was 42.65 year and ranged from 30 to 59 years. Majority (60-71%) of the respondents belonged to middle age category (36-51 yrs). This may be due to fact that these respondents are working in rural areas and are not promoted to next higher cadre (i.e., deputy director, joint director etc.) after a specific period of service in the field. Another reason for lower percentage of young age category may be due to delay procedure of recruitment for veterinary officers in AHD, Rajasthan. The present findings of the study are in line with findings of Maiti (2007), Verma (2007) and Rajkumar (2009).

According to educational qualification, 57 per cent respondents possessed B.V.Sc. & A.H., followed by M.V.Sc. (38%) and Ph.D. (5%) degrees. This result may be due to fact that basic education qualification for VO in all Indian states/UTs with same or different designation names is only B.V.Sc. & A.H. On other hand, there are not much more additional benefits for higher education (M.V.Sc. and Ph.D.) in AHD, Rajasthan. The present findings of the study are in line with findings of Maiti (2007), Rajkumar (2009), Ratnayake (2012) and Singh (2015).

The overall distribution of gender shows that majority (81%) of the respondents were male and remaining 19 per cent were females. This may be due to fact that male respondents had more opportunities and were more interested in veterinary profession as compared to female. Another reason for lower percentage of female respondents in AHD may be due to poor basic facilities in veterinary hospitals and more field work with lack of subordinates. However, in the present scenario the interest of the female is increasing day by day in animal husbandry and veterinary profession. The present findings are in line with findings of Agrawal and Agrawal (2014), Singh (2015), Singh *et al.* (2017), Goyal *et al.* (2018a) and Pateriya (2019).

Majority (97%) of the respondents was married and only 3 per cent was unmarried. This may be due to long duration of B.V.Sc. & A.H. course (5 to 5.5 years) and delay procedure of recruitment for veterinary officer by the state government. The present findings of the study are in line with findings of Maiti (2007), Verma (2007), Shruti (2015), Singh (2015) and Singh *et al.* (2017).

Majority of the respondents (71%) had a government service as their parental occupation followed by 19 per cent of the respondents having farming as their occupation. This may be due to the fact that a fair majority of respondents had government service as their parental occupation which might have attracted them toward a professional education for their children. This result may be also due to expensive and longer course programme of B.V.Sc. & A.H. and also due to rural background of respondents, which showed inherent and keen interest in the veterinary profession. The present findings of the study are in line with findings of Shruti (2015).

Majority of respondents had their family background rural and live in villages mostly. The reason might be that rural background of most of respondents had inherent interest in the professional courses i.e. B.V.Sc. & A.H. etc. because rearing animals is away of life for rural people. The present findings of the study are in line with findings of Verma (2007), Rajkumar (2009), Shruti (2015), Singh (2015) and Singh *et al.* (2017).

As per training received during service period, most of the respondents (63.57%) belonged to low category. The possible reasons for the above finding may be due to lack of regular and advanced trainings conducted by AHD, Rajasthan. Another reason may be high work load in field and there are no additional benefits of these trainings during service in AHD, Rajasthan. So, respondents are less interested in these trainings. The findings of the study are in line with findings of Verma (2007), Ratnayake (2012),

Table 1. Distribution of veterinary officers according to their socio-personal characteristics

S.No.	Socio-personal characteristics	Mean±S.D.	Category	Total respondents (n= 140)	
				f	%
1.	Age	42.65±8.06	Young (up to 35 yrs)	29	20.71
			Middle (36-51 yrs)	85	60.71
			Old (more than 51 yrs)	26	18.57
2.	Educational qualification		B.V.Sc. & A.H.	80	57
			M.V.Sc.	53	38
			Ph.D.	7	5
3.	Gender		Male	113	81
			Female	27	19
4.	Marital status		Single/ Unmarried	4	3
			Married	136	97
			Divorced/ divorcee/ widow/widower	0	0
5.	Parental occupation		Labour	0	0
			Farming	27	19
			Private Service	5	4
			Business	8	6
6.	Background		Government Service	100	71
			Rural	59	42
			Semi-urban	30	21
7.	Training received		Urban	51	37
			Low (up to 9)	89	63.57
			Medium (10-19)	35	25
8.	Place of posting		High (more than 19)	16	11.43
			Rural	73	52
			Semi-urban	20	14
9.	Distance of posting from residence		Urban	47	34
			Short (up to 31 km)	103	73.57
			Medium (32-60 km)	21	15
10.	Job experience in AHD (in years)	14.33±8.48	Long (more than 60 km)	16	11.43
			Less (up to 6 years)	30	21.43
			Medium (7-23 years)	74	52.86
			More (more than 23 years)	36	25.71

Shruti (2015), Goyal *et al.* (2018b) and Pateriya (2019).

Majority (52%) of the VOs were posted in rural areas in AHD, Rajasthan. Obviously since the VOs are supposed to serve the animal keepers who live in rural areas, the posting of veterinary officers in rural areas facilitates the farmers to have easy access to veterinary services. The results of the study are in line with the results of Rajkumar (2009) and Agrawal and Agrawal (2014).

According to distance of posting from residence, majority of the respondents (73.57%) belonged to short category (up to 31 km). The reason might be that majority of respondents were married and wish to settle close to their families with short distances. The present findings of the study are in line with findings of Singh (2015), Singh *et*

al. (2017) and Pateriya (2019).

Majority of respondents had medium category of job experience in AHD. The reason might be due to fact that majority (60.71%) of respondents in present study were middle aged (36-51 yrs.), thus their experience is observed to be low in the present study. The present findings of the study are in line with findings of Maiti (2007), Verma (2007), Ratnayake (2012), Agrawal and Agrawal (2014), Pateriya (2019) and Reddy *et al.* (2020).

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that government of Rajasthan needs to pay more attention to clear departmental backlogs and to conduct fresh recruitments of VOs at regular

intervals. AHD should also make policies for regular promotion and to give additional benefits for higher education and trainings received during service.

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