



Working Environment of Employees of Dairy Cooperative Society of Wayanad

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The study conducted in the Wayanad district of Kerala in 2023-24 focused on the working environment of employees of the dairy cooperative society (DCS). The sample consisted of 120 employees from 30 DCSs. The working environment was evaluated based on factors like people's participation, teamwork, job satisfaction, workload, and job stress. The findings revealed that over 60.837 of respondents were satisfied with the farmers' efforts in implementing extension programs, their interest in extension work, acceptance of technology, and local responses. Regarding teamwork, most respondents felt confident in the delegated authority, mutual desire to give and take, appreciated their colleagues' attitudes, and found the procedural design conducive to working together. In terms of job satisfaction, the majority were content with their professional social prestige, followed by the facilities provided by DCS, job authority, leave facilities, service security and overall job facilities. Job stress sources such as helping others, crowded work areas, subpar working conditions compared to others, and the job being too easy were not significant stressors for most respondents. Significant positive relationships were observed between satisfaction with people's participation and teamwork, teamwork, and job satisfaction, as well as between job stress and workload.

Key Words: Dairy cooperative society, Employees, Job Satisfaction, Job stress, Teamwork, Working environment, Workload.

INTRODUCTION

The organization has a responsibility to create a supportive and fulfilling environment where employees can achieve overall job satisfaction and contribute to the organization's goals. Key factors influencing employee motivation include job characteristics, management practices, employee traits, and broader environmental conditions (Devadass, 2011). The working environment refers to the setting in which individuals perform their jobs. It includes the physical surroundings, the nature of the job itself (such as workload and task complexity), broader organizational characteristics, and external business factors (Jain and Kaur, 2014).

Dairy cooperative societies exemplify a distinctive and influential model within the agricultural and dairy industries. These

cooperatives were created to enhance the dairy sector and meet local demand. In a dairy cooperative, local farmers combine their resources, including milk production and expertise, to create a unified organization. This collaborative approach enables them to address individual challenges and jointly invest in infrastructure, technology, and marketing initiatives. The cooperative model prioritizes community-driven decision-making, ensuring that the farmers' interests are paramount (Kujur and Bashir, 2024). In India, the dairy industry is expanding not only to increase milk production but also to provide stable employment opportunities for rural communities (Sonkamble *et al*, 2021). Key aspects of dairy cooperative societies encompass joint ownership, equitable profit sharing, and a focus on improving the overall well-being of member farmers, particularly women (Asha *et al*, 2021).

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Table 1. Satisfaction with people's participation.

Sr. No.	Statement	Satisfied		Somewhat satisfied		Not satisfied	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Efforts in implementation of extension programs for the farmers	62	51.67	44	36.67	14	11.67
2.	Interest of farmers in extension work	49	40.83	59	49.17	12	10.00
3.	Farmers acceptance of technology	37	30.83	68	56.67	15	12.50
4.	Availability of local response	45	37.50	63	52.00	12	10.00
5.	Voluntary participation of farmers	46	38.33	66	55.00	8	6.67
6.	Financial and other help for farmers	43	35.83	73	60.83	4	3.33

Table 2. Satisfaction with team work.

Sr. No.	Statement	Satisfied		Somewhat satisfied		Not satisfied	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Confidence in delegated authority	81	67.50	32	26.67	7	5.83
2.	Mutual desire to give and take	73	60.83	42	35.00	5	4.17
3.	Appreciative attitude of colleagues	72	60.00	43	35.83	5	4.17
4.	Procedural design to work together	70	58.33	46	38.33	4	3.33
5.	Proper incentive for team work	67	55.83	41	34.17	12	10.00

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in DCSs of Wayanad district of Kerala in the year 2023-24. Wayanad, a picturesque district in Kerala, is renowned for its lush landscapes and vibrant agricultural activities. Among its diverse agricultural practices, dairy farming holds a significant place, with dairy cooperative societies playing a crucial role in the sector's development. Out of 57 DCSs, 30 DCSs were randomly selected for the study. From each 30 DCSs, four employees were selected using stratified sampling methods for the study. A total of 120 employees formed the sample for the study. The working environment of employees at DCS was evaluated through factors such as people's participation, teamwork, job satisfaction, workload, and job stress. Data collection was conducted using a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The level of satisfaction in people's participation was examined and found that more

than 40.00 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with the effort in the implementation of extension programme for the farmers and the interest of farmers in extension work. 60.83 per cent of the respondents were somewhat satisfied with the financial and other help from farmers and farmers' acceptance of technology (56.67 %). Most of the employees of DCS were somewhat satisfied with the peoples' participation which shows that employees have somewhat better support from the farmers and can do their duties satisfactorily. The employees have somewhat better working environment as far as people's participation is concerned.

Most of the respondents were satisfied with confidence in delegated authority (67.50 %), mutual desire to give and take (60.83 %), an appreciative attitude of colleagues (60 %) and procedural design to work together (58.33 %) as mentioned in Table 2.

Team Work

According to the European Foundation (2007), team performance exceeds individual

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Table 3. Work load.

Sr. No.	Sub-components of work load	Heavy		Optimum		Light	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Fieldwork	10	8.33	51	42.50	59	49.17
2.	Office and clerical work	8	6.67	58	48.44	54	45.00

Table 4. Job Satisfaction.

Sr. No.	Statements	Satisfied		Somewhat satisfied		Not satisfied	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Professional social prestige	85	70.83	31	25.83	4	3.33
2.	Promotion	66	55.00	40	33.33	14	11.67
3.	Salary	47	39.17	39	32.50	34	28.33
4.	Incentives and rewards	45	37.50	62	51.67	13	10.83
5.	Facilities provided by DCS	75	62.50	39	32.50	6	5.00
6.	Job authority	74	61.67	39	32.50	7	5.83
7.	Service security	73	60.83	39	32.50	8	6.67
8.	Work distribution	63	52.50	50	41.67	7	5.83
9.	Service rules	66	55.00	45	37.50	9	7.50
10.	Allowances like PF, pension etc.	72	60.00	38	31.67	10	8.33
11.	Leave facility	73	60.83	40	33.33	7	5.83

performance, particularly in tasks that demand extensive knowledge, judgment, and varied perspectives. Additionally, teamwork fosters notable increases in productivity in fields that necessitate creative problem-solving, high adaptability, and effective operational management. It also fosters an environment conducive to knowledge and information exchange, often referred to as knowledge sharing. Ralea (2011) suggested that teamwork can lead to greater individual success within an organization and emphasized the importance of effective leadership in fostering strong teamwork.

The value of job satisfaction of employees of DCS indicated that more than 50.00 per cent of respondents were satisfied almost in all aspects except incentives rewards and salary. It was seen that 70.83 per cent of respondents were satisfied with professional social prestige followed by facilities provided by DCS (62.50 %), 61.67 per cent with job authority, and 60.83 per cent with leave facilities. This shows the working environment of DCS and job satisfaction is good

among the employees of DCS. It was also found that more than 30.00 per cent of employees were somewhat satisfied with their job satisfaction and it was also found that 28.33 per cent of employees were not satisfied with their salary.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which an individual is content with their current employment (Berber et al, 2022). It refers to the emotional state that results from an employee's belief that their work is meaningful (Erarslan, 2020). Alkahtani *et al* (2021) Indicated that employees with high job satisfaction levels demonstrate a greater degree of organizational commitment and dedication to their work. Job satisfaction plays a crucial role in long-term productivity. It is imperative to implement strategies that include appropriate rewards and enhanced opportunities for promotion. These measures are essential for enabling employees to fulfil their duties with optimal job satisfaction (Meena and Singh, 2003).

Table 5. Job Stress.

Sr. No.	Statement	Not a source of stress		Sometimes a source of stress		Always a source of stress	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	I work on my unnecessary job activities	69	57.50	45	37.50	6	5.00
2.	My job activities are unclear to me	96	80.00	23	19.17	1	0.83
3.	To keep up with my job, I usually take home, work with me.	100	83.33	16	13.33	4	3.33
4.	My job is boring	101	84.17	16	13.33	3	2.50
5.	I am responsible for people	99	82.50	18	15.00	3	2.50
6.	My work area (office) is too crowded	86	71.67	24	20.00	10	8.33
7.	I do not have the authority to do my job well	104	86.67	15	12.50	1	0.83
8.	My job is too difficult	95	79.17	18	15.00	7	5.83
9.	My job has become too routine	83	69.17	31	25.83	6	5.00
10.	There is not enough time in the day to do my job	89	74.17	22	18.33	9	7.50
11.	Work condition of my job is below satisfactory	81	67.50	28	23.33	11	9.17
12..	I received conflicting requests from two or more people	84	70.00	30	25.00	6	5.00
13..	I am not sure what is expected of me	86	71.67	31	25.83	3	2.50
14.	I am responsible for too many jobs	75	62.50	40	33.33	5	4.17
15.	My job is too easy	76	63.33	33	27.50	11	9.17
16.	I am responsible for helping others	99	82.50	13	10.83	8	6.67
17.	I do not have time to take an occasional break from the job	78	65.00	30	25.00	12	10.00
18.	My working conditions are not as good as the working conditions of others	76	63.33	33	27.50	11	9.17

Job Stress

In assessing job stress among the employees' various factors were considered. These included workload perceptions such as taking work home, clarity of job activities, the perception of job difficulty and routine, and environmental factors like crowded workspaces. The study found that more than 60.00 per cent of respondents did not find their job as a source of stress. 37.50 per cent of respondents found unnecessary job activities as sometimes a source of stress. Less than 7.00 per cent of respondents found their working environment as always, a source of stress (Table 5).

Interrelationship between factors of working environment of employees of DCS

The interrelationships between various factors of the working environment among employees of DCS were analysed using correlation coefficients. The findings revealed significant positive correlations between satisfaction with people's participation and both team work ($r = 0.5447$, $p < 0.001$) and job satisfaction ($r = 0.4855$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, team work showed a strong positive correlation with job satisfaction ($r = 0.6363$, $p < 0.001$).

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Table 6. Interrelationship between factors of working environment.

Factors of working environment	Satisfaction with people's participation	Team Work	Satisfaction with job	Job stress	Work Load
Satisfaction with people's participation	1.0000				
Team Work	0.5447***	1.0000			
Satisfaction with job	0.4855***	0.6363***	1.0000		
Job stress	-0.0035 ^{NS}	-0.0669 ^{NS}	-0.2619**	1.0000	
Work Load	-0.1193 ^{NS}	-0.2081*	-0.4579***	0.1852*	1.0000

In contrast, job stress did not show significant correlations with satisfaction with people's participation ($r = -0.0035$, $p > 0.05$) or team work ($r = -0.0669$, $p > 0.05$). However, it exhibited a moderate negative correlation with job satisfaction ($r = -0.2619$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher job stress levels were associated with lower job satisfaction.

Furthermore, work load demonstrated a significant negative correlation with job satisfaction ($r = -0.4579$, $p < 0.001$) and a weak positive correlation with job stress ($r = 0.1852$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that higher workloads were linked to lower job satisfaction and slightly elevated job stress levels.

These results underscored the complex interplay between different aspects of the working environment and their impact on job satisfaction and stress levels among subject matter specialists in the agricultural sector.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that DCS employees generally experience a supportive working environment, with significant satisfaction in extension program efforts (51.67 %), teamwork (67.50 % confidence in delegated authority), and optimal workload perception (48.44 % office, 42.50 % field). Over 50 per cent are satisfied with job aspects like professional prestige (70.83 %) and facilities (62.50 %), though incentives (37.50 %) and salary (39.17 %) satisfaction are lower.

More than 60 per cent do not find their job stressful, though some stress is noted from unclear activities (19.17 %) and taking work home (13.33 %). Positive correlations exist between people's participation, teamwork, and job satisfaction, while job stress and workload negatively impact job satisfaction.

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