

A Study on Level of Satisfaction of Client Farmers in Various Spheres of Livestock Services

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Abstract

A purposive study was conducted in three taluks of Erode district of Tamil Nadu on randomly selected 180 client farmers by adopting multi-stage random sampling technique. A combination of Ex-post facto and exploratory research designs was engaged under five different spheres. The study revealed that more than half (65.00 %) of the client farmers were in medium category of satisfaction level followed by high and low categories of satisfaction, 23.33 and 11.67 per cent, respectively. Also, the client farmers were fully satisfied with the ability of history taking (53.33 %) and understanding of clinical symptoms (62.78 %) by the Veterinarians. With respect to the competency in clinical treatment, the farmers were fully satisfied with the activities like selecting the drug of choice (58.34 %), Artificial Insemination (54.44 %), Gynecological treatment (57.22 %), Obstetrical treatment (71.11 %) and pregnancy diagnosis (82.22 %). Regarding the temperament of the Veterinarians, respondents were satisfied with the timely availability (56.67 %), competency in generalise the facts and drawing inferences (52.78 %), ability to build good rapport with livestock farmers (65.00 %) and ability to listen patiently and understands client farmers feelings and opinions (47.78 %). The study concluded that, it is desired to conduct periodical on-the job training programmes to veterinary officers not only on treatment of animals but also on extension activities like consultancy service for scientific animal husbandry practices and awareness campaign & also on soft-skill development so as to make the veterinarians more efficient in their job which in-turn shall make livestock venture profitable for farmers.

Keywords: Client farmers, Level of satisfaction, Veterinary service

Introduction

Livestock have been considered as an integral component of India's agricultural and rural economy since time immemorial. In India, almost sixty per cent of the population is involved in agriculture which accounts for only 18-20% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Livestock sector turn out to be main source of income as well as nutrition for most of rural population. As per 20th Livestock census, 2019 India's livestock population consist of; cattle 193.46 million, buffaloes 109.85 million, sheep 74.26 million, goats 148.88 million, pigs 9.06 million, camel 2.51 lakh, horses 3.42 lakh and poultry 851.81 million. Tamil Nadu, possessing 4.56 % of India's livestock population, contributes 4.39 % to country's milk production and 7.88 % to meat production. The State produces 18.29 % of the total eggs produced in India, next only to Andhra Pradesh (18.67 %). As a result, the state contributes 5.29 % to the total value of output from livestock in the country. In the state, the contribution of livestock to the total GDP has increased from 2.88 % in 2007-08 to 5.47 % in 2016-17 and its contribution to the agricultural GDP has risen from 25.70 % to 45.62 % during the same period. (Policy note 2020-2021, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries Department, Govt. of Tamil Nadu, 2020)

The Animal Husbandry department of Tamil Nadu provides timely and effective health coverage to the livestock and poultry population of the state to augment their production and productivity. Veterinary services are provided through a vast network of veterinary institutions located across the state; from district headquarters to remote villages. The department is responsible for matters related to livestock production, preservation, protection and improvement of stocks and dairy development. State Department of Animal Husbandry (DAH) is equipped with 14 Veterinary Polyclinics, 16 Clinician Centres, 147 Veterinary Hospitals, 2,721 Veterinary Dispensaries and 825 Veterinary Sub-centres. Besides these, 56 Mobile Veterinary units manned by Veterinary Assistant Surgeons provide veterinary services at the doorsteps of the farmers. Above and beyond these, the department also supports livestock rearing community and their livestock by promoting Animal health, production, marketing and extension services.

According to Linder-Pelz, (1982) the satisfaction of the client is mediated by personal beliefs and values about service as well as expectation about service. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the client's judgment on quality of service in all its aspects. As that of most of the developing countries, in India also, the veterinary services have been traditionally funded, managed and delivered by the public sector with significant subsidies or at free of cost basis (Ravikumar *et al.*, 2007 and Singodia, 2019). Hence, adequate and timely supply of quality inputs and services to the needy farmers is a prerequisite for increasing production. Farmers need the quality services from competent technical personnel on which they depend for developing their farming operations. On the other hand, the field veterinarians also face many hurdles in dispatching their services to their clients with great difficulties. (Verma *et al.*, 2020) Hence, present study was designed to assess the satisfaction of the client farmers about veterinary services provided by department of animal husbandry through veterinary officers.

Material and Methods

The study was purposively conducted in Erode district of Tamil Nadu as the researcher's familiarity and as this district occupied 5th position with an annual milk production of 327.7 MT in 2012 -13 (Dairying in Tamil Nadu, A Statistical Profile 2014) and dairying activities in the state. There are two Veterinary Polyclinics, six Veterinary Hospitals, 103 Veterinary Dispensaries, 25 Veterinary Sub-centres and three Mobile Veterinary units functioning under the department of Animal Husbandry (DAH), Erode. Erode district consists of ten revenue taluks *viz.*, Erode, Perundurai, Modakkurichi, Kodumudi, Gobichettipalayam, Sathyamangalam, Bhavani, Anthiyur, Thalavadi and Nambiyur & from these, three taluks (Gobichettipalayam, Erode and Sathyamangalam) were selected randomly. From the selected taluks, two veterinary dispensaries were selected randomly and from each dispensary 30 client farmers, thus a total of 180 client farmers were selected randomly by adopting multi-stage random sampling technique and they constitute the respondents for the study.

A combination of *Ex-post facto* and exploratory research designs was engaged in this study. A tailor-made tool was developed with consultation of subject matter specialists to measure the level of client farmers satisfaction under five spheres *viz.*, Competency of the technical personnel in disease diagnosis, clinical treatment regime, skill in surgeries, extension services and general temperament of the technical personnel. There are six statements under each sphere, thus a total of 30 statements were developed and the farmers were requested to mention their level of satisfaction on a three-point continuum *viz.*, fully satisfied, partially satisfied and not satisfied against each

statements and a score of 3,2 and 1 was assigned respectively. The score for each statement was summed up and the farmers were classified into three categories viz., with low, medium and high level of satisfaction based on cumulative square root frequency method and veterinary services were ranked on the basis of weighted mean percent.

$$\text{Weighted mean percent} = \frac{\text{Score obtained by the statement}}{\text{Maximum possible score of statement for that statement}} \times 100$$

Data collection was done by personal interview method and the collected data were coded, tabulated, classified and categorized for systematic statistical analysis. Descriptive statistical tools like mean, SD, frequency, percentage were used for data analysis. The results were interpreted accordingly

Results and Discussion

Distribution of farmers based on level of satisfaction regarding veterinary services

Table1: Distribution of client farmers according to their level satisfaction towards livestock services

N = 180

Sl. No	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.	Low (<35.05)	21	11.67
2.	Medium (35.05 – 53.92)	117	65.00
3.	High (> 53.93)	42	23.33

Mean = 44.48; SD = 9.44

It is evident from the Table 1 that more than half (65.00 %) of the client farmers were found in medium category of satisfaction level followed by high and low category of satisfaction, 23.33 per cent and 11.67 per cent, respectively. The data showed that majority of farmers belonged in medium to high level of satisfaction towards veterinary services, as nowadays veterinary services are available even at door step in every village owing to reason of frequent recruitment of veterinarians both by the Government as well as private sector. Majority of the livestock farmers belonged to medium level of satisfaction towards the various aspects of SDAH livestock services like competency of the SDAH personnel in providing various services, behaviour of the service providers and recovery of animals after treatment. These findings are in line with Nishi and Kumar (2011), where they had reported that majority of dairy farmers were found in moderate category of satisfaction regarding activities of dairy cooperatives in which they were members. They also reported that, a good per cent age of member farmers i.e. 22.50 per cent felt high satisfaction with the societies, whereas 15.00 and 11.25 per cent s of the respondents felt low and very high level of satisfaction, respectively with the functioning of dairy cooperative societies. The study reveals that there is a huge scope for improvement in SDAH livestock service delivery so as to make the end-users more satisfied with them.

Level of satisfaction of client farmers in various spheres livestock services

Table 2: Level of satisfaction of client farmers in various spheres of livestock services (N=180)

Sl. No	Type of Veterinary service	Level of satisfaction		
		Fully satisfied (f)	Partially satisfied (f)	Not satisfied (f)
A	Competency in diagnosis			
1	Ability of history taking	96 (53.33)	51 (28.33)	33 (18.34)
2	Understanding clinical symptoms	113 (62.78)	38 (21.11)	29 (16.11)
3	Performing laboratory diagnosis	65 (36.11)	81 (45.00)	34 (18.89)
4	Performing post mortem examination	42 (23.33)	109 (60.56)	29 (16.11)
5	Competency in sample collection	23 (12.78)	118 (65.55)	39 (21.67)

6	Performing radiography	20 (11.11)	142 (78.89)	18 (10.00)
B	Competency in clinical treatment			
1	Right drug of choice (Prescription)	105 (58.34)	58 (32.22)	17 (9.44)
2	Artificial insemination	98 (54.44)	63 (35.00)	19 (10.56)
3	Gynaecological treatment	103 (57.22)	65 (36.11)	12 (6.67)
4	Obstetrical treatment	128 (71.11)	41 (22.78)	11 (6.11)
5	Pregnancy diagnosis	148 (82.22)	25 (13.89)	7 (3.89)
C	Competency in surgical cases			
1	Minor surgical treatment	45 (25.00)	106 (58.88)	29 (16.11)
2	Major surgical treatment	48 (26.67)	113 (62.78)	19 (10.55)
3	Fracture management	28 (15.56)	63 (35.00)	89 (49.44)
4	Post-operative care	56 (31.11)	85 (47.22)	39 (21.67)
5	Anesthesia (Local anesthesia – evident from complete restrained / immobilization status)	19 (10.56)	116 (64.44)	45 (25.00)
6	Cost effective procedures	48 (26.67)	91 (50.55)	41 (22.78)
D	Advisory / Extension services			
1	Livestock advisory services	42 (23.33)	109 (60.56)	29 (16.11)
2	Supply of publications	37 (20.56)	65 (36.11)	78 (43.33)
3	Organization of mass contact programmes	43 (23.89)	74 (41.11)	63 (35.00)
4	Information about disease outbreak	89 (49.45)	58 (32.22)	33 (18.33)
5	Distribution of farm-input materials	51 (28.34)	87 (48.33)	42 (23.33)
6	Ability to use appropriate communication channel to convey messages regarding line of treatment, prognosis, extension activities etc.,	58 (32.22)	105 (58.34)	17 (9.44)
E	Temperament of the technical personnel			
1	In-time availability of veterinary officer	102 (56.67)	57 (31.67)	21 (11.66)
2	Competent enough to generalise the facts and draw inferences from them	95 (52.78)	72 (40.00)	13 (7.22)
3	Ability to write message clearly and convincingly	67 (37.22)	98 (54.45)	15 (8.33)
4	Ability to build good rapport with livestock farmers	117 (65.00)	46 (25.56)	17 (9.44)
5	Ability to listen patiently and understands client farmers' feelings and opinion	86 (47.78)	65 (36.11)	29 (16.11)
6	Keeps promises given to livestock farmers	76 (42.22)	85 (47.23)	19 (10.55)

Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage

The results from Table 2 clearly indicated that under the sphere of Competency in diagnosis, the client farmers were fully satisfied with the ability of history taking (53.33 %) and understanding of clinical symptom (62.78 %) by the Veterinary Assistant Surgeons. In the activities like laboratory diagnosis (45.00 %), performing post mortem examination (60.56 %), competency in sample collection (65.55 %) and performing radiography (78.89 %) majority of the client farmers were partially satisfied. This may be due to that the farmers were not familiar with these

activities. With respect to the competency in clinical treatment, the farmers were fully satisfied with activities like selecting the drug of choice which was assumed in this study as having prescribing right medicines which is readily available and cost effective (58.34 %), Artificial Insemination (54.44 %), Gynaecological treatment (57.22 %), Obstetrical treatment (71.11 %), pregnancy diagnosis (82.22 %). This may be due to that the farmers can visibly see the results of these activities and they got satisfied. Regarding the farmers satisfaction with the competency of the veterinarians in surgical cases, majority of the farmers were satisfied with minor surgical treatment (58.88 %), major surgical treatment (62.78 %), cost effective procedures (50.55 %) and post-operative care (47.22 %) skills of the veterinarians. With respect to advisory services, majority of the farmers were partially satisfied except for the activity of Information about disease outbreak (49.45 %) wherein they got full satisfaction about the performance of veterinarian. Regarding the temperament of the technical personnel, the farmers were satisfied with the timely availability of veterinarians (56.67 %), competency in generalise the facts and draw inferences (52.78 %), ability of the veterinarian to build good rapport with livestock farmers (65.00 %) and ability to listen patiently and understands client farmers feelings and opinions (47.78 %). Further, it could be observed that the farmers were partially satisfied with that of the veterinarians in keeping promises given to them (47.23 %).

Conclusion

It is evident from the findings that majority of farmers were having medium to high level of satisfaction regarding veterinary services. It is time to ensure continuing in-time availability of veterinary services at farmers' door by establishing more mobile veterinary units so that veterinary service reaches every door step. It is desired to conduct periodical on-the job training programmes to veterinary officers not only on treatment of animals but also on extension activities like consultancy service for scientific animal husbandry practices and awareness campaign and also on soft skill development so as to make the veterinarians more efficient in their job which in-turn shall make livestock venture more profitable for farmers.

Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest.

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