

PREFERENCE ON DAIRY HUSBANDRY SERVICES AMONG VARIOUS SERVICE PROVIDERS IN SALEM DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Milk marketing agencies (Tamil Nadu Cooperative Milk Marketing (TNCMM) co-operatives and private agency) and Department of Animal Husbandry (DAH) of the Government of Tamil Nadu were providing different services viz., breeding, therapeutic, preventive, input and extension services related to dairy farming. Availability and accessibility of the above services to the dairy farmers need to be judged from the perspective of the dairy farmers, so as to streamline the services in a more efficient manner. This study was conducted following exploratory research design to understand the perceptions of the milk producers on the availability and accessibility of these services in Salem district. Multistage random sampling was adopted for selection of 150 respondents (75 milk pourers of TNCMM co-operatives and 75 milk pourers of private agencies) from the blocks of Salem district. Randomly selected respondents were interviewed personally for collection of primary data. Majority of the respondents (80 %) of both the groups perceived that AI services were accessible to them both at institution as well as at doorstep. The study also reveals that none of the agencies were able to deliver the dairy husbandry services to the farmers in a comprehensive manner. The dairy farmers preferred to have services delivered at their doorsteps for the obvious reason of the difficulty of taking the animal to the established centres.

Key words: Dairy husbandry services, milk producers, DAH, TNCMM

INTRODUCTION

Dairy sector plays an important role in socio-economic development of rural households in India. Effective and efficient delivery of dairy husbandry services is vital for the improvement of dairy production. It depends upon the availability and accessibility of the veterinarians and the technical inputs required for delivery of services. In general veterinary services are provided by DAH, co-operatives and private corporate dairies contribute towards dairy development and poverty alleviation. Both the milk marketing agencies (Dairy cooperatives and Private agency) extended

dairy husbandry services only to their respective members. The members however, have the liberty to seek the services from the DAH irrespective of their affiliation to co-operative or private agency.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was purposively conducted following exploratory research design in Salem district of Tamil Nadu due to the fact that district had milk production of 4.6 lakh tones/annum and occupies first position in the state with a cross bred population of 4 lakhs. Both co-operative and private agencies are involved in delivery of

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dairy husbandry services to the milk pourers and marketing of milk.

Multistage random sampling was adopted to select the respondents for the study. Salem district comprises 20 blocks. In the first stage five blocks were selected randomly. From each block one village was selected randomly where both milk marketing agencies (Co-operatives and Private agency) were operating. List of milk pourers/members were collected from the dairy co-operatives and private milk procurement centres separately from the selected villages. From the list, 15 milk pourers from each of the milk collection agency were selected on simple random sampling basis. Thus, a total of 30 respondents from one village were included as the sample respondents for this study. The total of 150 respondents was included from five villages (75 from co-operatives and 75 milk pourers from private agencies). The data were collected with the help of pre-tested semi-structured interview schedule. The collected data were subjected to simple statistical analysis such as frequency and percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Accessibility to Dairy Husbandry Services for respondents

The agencies claimed that they were providing various services for the benefit of the dairy farmers. The respondents also perceived that the services were available mostly at the institution level. But, the extent to which these services are accessible to the milk producers can indicate a true

picture of these services. Most of the services may be available but their accessibility was limited to some members. This was well exemplified in the report of Working Group on Animal Husbandry and Dairying (2007-12) which stated that the under-privileged livestock owners face a number of constraints such as poor accessibility to veterinary services, marketing support and the low prices received by them for products. The perceptions of the respondents on the availability and accessibility of the services are presented in Table 1.

The majority of the respondents (80 %) of both milk marketing agencies perceived that AI services were accessible to them both at institution as well as at doorstep. None of the respondents of co-operative agency perceived that the therapeutic services for treatment of sick animals were accessible to them at their doorsteps. However, majority of the respondents of private agency indicated that the above services were accessible to them in their doorstep. In general these services were accessible to all the dairy farmers in the villages at the institutions but accessible at doorsteps to very few dairy farmers i.e., who were ready to pay for the consuming services. Private agency insists on making these services accessible at their doorstep to their members and hence majority of them perceived that the services were accessible to them. From Table 1 it's clear that for all the respondents inputs and vaccination services are available in their milk procurement centre only it's not accessible to them at their door step.

Table 1
Distribution of respondents on availability and accessibility to services at doorsteps

Type of Services	Co-operative (n=75)				Private (n=75)			
	Availability		Accessibility at door step		Availability		Accessibility at door step	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
AI	75	100.00	60	80.00	75	100.00	60	80.00
Therapeutic services	75	100.00	0	0.00	75	100.00	60	0.00
Supply of Inputs	75	100.00	0	0.00	75	100.00	0	0.00
Vaccination	75	100.00	0	0.00	75	100.00	0	0.00

Preference of milk producers for availing breeding services

The respondents were requested to give their preferences in availing the dairy husbandry services from the service providers. The figures given in Table 2 showed that one-half of the respondents (76) preferred private practitioners (vets) for availing AI services for their cattle. Next in order of preference was private agency which was preferred by about 49 members in availing AI services. Although there was no restriction for availing AI services from DAH, very few (9) respondents preferred AI services. The finding is contrary to the observations of Shinde *et al.*, (1996) reported that majority of dairy farmers (83%) received AI services from DAH.

The preference of the respondents to avail AI services mostly from the private practitioners and staff of private agency was because these service providers deliver the service at their doorsteps. Whereas, the DAH provides AI service only at the premises of the institution which many respondents did not prefer in view of the labour involved in taking the animal to the institution. In fact the DAH staff also work as private practitioners to deliver the services at the doorstep of the farmers. The finding is similar to the findings of Mugunieri *et al.*, (2002) and Mirajkar *et al.*, (2011) who reported that majority of the livestock keepers preferred para-veterinary practitioners. Peeling and Holden (2004) also reported that the livestock keepers use Community Health Animal Workers

(CHAWs) more frequently than any other service provider.

Preference of milk producers for availing therapeutic services

Most of the respondents preferred therapeutic services from the private practitioners who were none other than the veterinarians of the DAH. Most of the respondents of co-operative agency also preferred its therapeutic services from private practitioners and few from DAH. It is also clear from the Table 2 that the therapeutic services were not accessible at their doorsteps from the co-operative agency as the service providers deliver their services at centre that too on specified days only. Hence, these services were not preferred by its members. Although the primary responsibility of the DAH is to provide diagnostic and treatment services to all the livestock owners, very few respondents preferred its therapeutic services which were accessible only at its centres. This finding supported the observations of Ahuja *et al.*, (2003) who reported that very small proportion of the farmers received medication from the government centres. This finding is also similar to the findings of Singh and Datta (2013) who reported that the distance of the institution influenced the preference of farmers to the institution for availing therapeutic services. The respondents who preferred private practitioners for availing therapeutic services at their doorsteps were ready to pay for these services. The reason might be the easy accessibility of the para-veterinarian on call for doorstep services.

Table 2

Preference of milk producers towards the service providers for availing services

Type of Services	Co-operative (n=75)	Private agency (n=75)	DAH (n=150)	Private practitioner (n=150)
AI	16 (21.33)	49 (65.33)	9 (6.00)	76 (50.67)
Therapeutic	0 (0.00)	36 (48.0)	16 (10.7)	98 (65.3)
Cattle Feed	16 (21.33)	11 (14.7)	Not supplied	Not supplied
Fodder Slips	2 (2.67)	3 (4.0)	1 (0.7)	Not supplied
Interactive meeting	8 (10.67)	4 (5.33)	0 (0.00)	Not organized
Campaign	8 (10.67)	6 (8.00)	5 (3.33)	Not organized

Preference of milk producers for availing preventive services

Vaccines were usually supplied by the DAH and the respondents also preferred to have the vaccination services from DAH at free of cost. About 18 and 11 of the respondents preferred DAH for vaccination and deworming respectively. Respondents stated that preventive services were done by the service providers once in a while that also on a specific time and date at a particular place.

Preference of milk producers for availing input services

The milk marketing agencies were supplying limited quantity of cattle feed to their respective members mostly on subsidized rate. Similarly, the other inputs like fodder seeds/ slips, mineral mixture etc., were being provided to very few dairy farmers due to the poor budget allocation for these inputs. Hence, very few respondents preferred to purchase from their respective agencies but many times these inputs were not accessible to them (Table 2).

The figures in the Table 2 showed that only one respondent in the study area availed fodder slips from DAH. The finding is contradicted with the findings of Shinde *et al.*, (1996) who reported that about 30 per cent of the dairy farmers received one mini kit fodder from DAH.

Preference of milk producers for availing extension services

About 10 per cent of the milk producers of co-operative attended the campaign and interactive meeting organized by federation. Similarly very less number of respondents of Private agency attended the campaign and interactive meeting organized by their agencies. Only three per cent of the respondents attended the campaign organized by DAH. The finding is similar to the findings in the Prakasam and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh

where only four per cent of the farmers participated in extension activities of DAH (www.nird.org.in). Very few respondents had favourable attitude towards preferred organization for campaigns and interactive meetings as most of them do not realize the usefulness of participating in such meetings and hence consider their participation as a waste of time. This finding is similar to that of observation in Chittoor and Prakasam districts of Andhra Pradesh where only small number of respondents participated in the extension activities of Co-operative agency (www.nird.org.in).

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the milk producers in Salem district preferred AI and therapeutic services at their doorsteps which were at present being provided mostly by the staff of DAH and private agency in the study area. It is evident from the study that only few respondents preferred and availed the services of vaccination, deworming, cattle feed, fodder slips and extension services from their respective milk procurement agencies and DAH. The dairy farmers preferred to have services delivered at their doorsteps for the obvious reason of the difficulty in taking the animal to the service centres. This study is giving strong indication that mobile veterinary units can be formed by DAH for delivering services on cost recovery basis to the areas which are far away from the institution. It could be concluded that there could be better linkage between stakeholders of personnels of Milk marketing agencies (Tamil Nadu Cooperative Milk Marketing co-operatives and private agency) and Department of Animal Husbandry of the Government of Tamil Nadu (DAH) for better preventive and extension service delivery for sustainable dairying by milk producers.

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