

PERCEIVED TRAINING NEEDS OF VETERINARY OFFICERS IN KARNATAKA – A MICRO APPROACH

J. Shilpa Shree* and Y.B. Rajeshwari

Dept. of Livestock Production and Management, Veterinary College, Bangalore – 560 024

E-mail: shilpashreej23@gmail.com (**Corresponding Author*)

Abstract: The main objective of the study was to determine the training needs of veterinary officers in order to suggest appropriate training programs. The study was carried out in Veterinary College, Bangalore during a training programme for Veterinary officers (60 respondents) of Animal Husbandry Department of Karnataka to assess their training needs. The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The detailed questionnaire in relation to subject and non-subject needs was given to the Veterinary officers and they were asked to fill it. The data were collected during the period from January to February 2015. Personal profile was analysed using percentage analysis and their needs under two categories (Non-subject and subject) were ranked using Garrett's ranking technique. The results indicated that knowledgeable teachers and government oriented training are the biggest non-subject expectation and advancement in clinical skills, update in emerging diseases and diagnostic techniques/laboratory techniques were the major subject needs of the Veterinary officers in Karnataka.

Keywords: Training needs, Government veterinarians, Garrett's ranking technique.

Introduction

Professional skill in every sphere needs to be updated regularly through research periodicals and continuous training programmes so that emerging problems can be addressed properly. Growing human population and rapid urbanization are fuelling tremendous growth in the demand for animal food and the livestock sector is expected to maintain a steady growth rate till 2025. Hence, the demand for quality Veterinarians to handle this situation and their quality is expected to raise manifolds in the years to come due to the constantly changing technology. Veterinarians apply science in a wide diversity of situations which demands ability in communication, treatment, observation, critical thinking, problem-solving, client education, practice management and public relations, knowledge of legislations and ethics, and a profound understanding of animal behaviour and the relationships between people, administrators and animals along with their clinical and surgical skills. Veterinary officers in the Animal Husbandry Department of Karnataka even though they are competent they are

haunted by lack of access to information. In the view of making a training programme effective, the first essential step is to identify the training needs of veterinary officers. Continuous improvement in animal husbandry requires periodical refreshing of skill and knowledge to make veterinarians more effective on their job. Since the training courses by institutes was purely based on their own perception which may vary from the perception of the trainees. In spite of all these efforts there is a breakage of linkage between latest advancement in veterinary and animal sciences and the Veterinary officers in the government. To fill this gap, training is necessary for the government Veterinary officers on the latest advancements in clinical techniques and the recent trends in livestock production and management. Thus it becomes a necessity for the institutions to analyse their needs and provide them need based training. Organising regular seminars, presentation on thrust areas by staff at department level will help in refreshment of the subject (Nisha and Sudeep Kumar, 2011). In this context, the objective of the current study was ‘to develop a clear understanding on the training provided to veterinary officers and also to find gap between actual and requirement of veterinarians and also needs to update regularly in this constantly changing environment.’

Methodology

The present study was conducted as a convenient sampling during training for Veterinary officers at Veterinary College, Bangalore which is a premier institute under the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University which offers training programmes for the Veterinary officers of Animal Husbandry department regularly. A structured questionnaire was prepared in consultation with the experts and provided to the 60 government Veterinary officers who attended the training. The personal profile of the Veterinary officers was analysed using percentage analysis. Garret’s ranking technique was adopted to analyse the needs of the Veterinary officers. The respondents were asked to rank the given set of needs divided into two categories. The order of the needs that were given by the respondents was converted into ranks by the following formula (Garret and Woodworth, 1971).

$$\text{Per cent position} = \frac{100(R_{ij} - 0.50)}{N_j}$$

Where,

R_{ij} - Rank given for i^{th} factor by j^{th} individual

N_j - Number of factors ranked by j^{th} individual

The per cent position of each rank thus obtained was converted into scores by referring to table given by Garret. For each constraint or problem, the scores of the individual respondents were added together and divided by the total number of respondents for whom scores were given and thus based on the mean scores, the ranks were given. These mean scores for all the factors were arranged in descending order and the most important factor was ranked first and the least important problem was ranked as the last.

Results and discussion

Personal profile of government veterinarians

The present study was undertaken with the objective of analyzing the training needs of Veterinary officers working in rural parts of Karnataka. The highest numbers of respondents were males (83.33%) and the remaining 16.67% were females. Longer travel hours and family commitments discourage females from attending these kinds of trainings. The highest percentage of respondents (43.33%) came under the age of above 35, followed by 31.67% in the age group of 31-35 and 25% in the age group of 25-30. This is due to the fact that the department selects Veterinary officers for training based on rotation and not on real interest and it also excludes most of the younger Veterinary officers. Majority respondents (65%) who attended the training programme had educational qualification of B.V. Sc & A.H. followed by 31.67% respondents had educational qualification of M.V. Sc. and very less number of respondents (3.33%) had educational qualification of Ph.D.

Majority of the respondents have attended trainings previously (73.33%) and the remaining 26.67% had not attended any previous training which shows poor learning interest of the government Veterinary officers. A majority of the respondents (65%) were working in veterinary dispensaries and the remaining 35% of respondents worked in rural veterinary dispensary.

Table 1: Personal profile of the respondents

(n=60)

S.No.	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Personal profile			
1.	<u>Gender</u>		
	Male	50	83.33
	Female	10	16.67
2.	<u>Age</u>		
	Upto 30 years	15	25.00
	31-35	19	31.67
	>35 years	26	43.33
3.	<u>Educational qualification</u>		

	B. V. Sc & A. H	39	65.00
	M. V. Sc	19	31.67
	Ph.D.	2	3.33
4	<u>Previous training attended</u>		
	Yes	44	73.33
	No	16	26.67
5	<u>Place of work</u>		
	Veterinary dispensary	39	65.00
	Rural veterinary dispensary	21	35.00

Non – subject needs

The study showed that knowledgeable teachers are the topmost non-subject needs of the Veterinary officers. This indicates that they need well experienced and well trained teacher during training programme and there is a lack of trained teacher in those veterinary institutions. Nisha *et al.* (2011) found that majority of the professors underwent only less than five trainings in their career. According to Sawhney *et al.* (2010), in the present situation, the major problem faced by the institutions of higher education is quality deficit when compared to that of international standards. Government oriented training was felt as a second most important non subject need by the respondents which was highly lacking in our scenario. Trainings are conducted mostly through lectures and it mainly speaks about technologies used in veterinary educational institutions. Atang (1984) said that consideration should be given to orient training towards national or regional problems. Teaching methods was considered as moderate need for veterinary officers because some institutions use only lecture method which may not influence the interest level of officers. So, different teaching methods should be used in training programme that will increase the interest level. Physical facilities and venue were felt as minor need as the Veterinary officers knew that quality training will only be provided by teaching institutions. The organising committee of the training conducted by veterinary institutes selects the best faculties to conduct training thus making it a minor cause of worry.

Table 2: Ranking of Non-Subject needs

(n=23)

S.No.	Item	Rank	Score
1	Knowledgeable teachers	I	75.17
2	Government oriented training	II	68.17
3	Teaching methods	III	60.50
4	Physical facilities	IV	53.50
5	Venue	V	25.83

Subject needs

The study showed that the advancement in clinical skills and update in emerging diseases are of the major subject needs of the Veterinary officers. Emergence of new diseases in livestock needs a better clinical skill and epidemiological skill to control them. Diagnostic techniques/laboratory techniques placed in third position among the all subject needs. Casey (2010) observed that a strong background in the basic sciences; an in-depth knowledge of the literature in any government of specialisation with the correct interpretation; an understanding of production economics; handy skills such as being computer literate is required for veterinary profession.

Extension services, communication skills, advancement in clinical skills and control of outbreaks felt as a moderate need by the respondents. This is also important to maintain a harmonial relationship with the farmers and to make them adopt to newer technologies. Casey (2010) stated that animal science graduates with good communication skills would gain personal and professional advantages with improved academic achievement, attitude and confidence levels and in their ability to apply and use animal science concepts.

Epidemiology, laboratory techniques and feed chart preparation were felt as minor need. Non-availability of infrastructure for veterinary assistant surgeons have discouraged them from venturing into these areas. Formulation of feed chart is a complex job for a veterinary assistant surgeon with a bachelor's degree thus leaving the government to subject matter specialists.

Table 3: Ranking of subject needs

(n=23)

S.No.	Item	Rank	Score
1	Farm animal management	VIII	52.30
2	Feasibility report preparation	IV	64.26
3	Internet and information search	XV	33.28
4	Extension services	IX	51.53
5	Public relation & effective communication	XIV	42.21
6	Advancement in clinical skills	I	76.81
7	Human resource management	V	59.95
8	Epidemiology	VI	54.26
9	Diagnostic techniques/laboratory techniques	III	64.56
10	Feed chart preparation	XVI	28.97
11	Biosecurity	X	51.52
12	Update in emerging diseases	II	66.62
13	Control of outbreak	XI	49.26
14	Animal health regulation and laws	XIII	42.30

15	Statistical & epidemiological software	VII	52.40
16	Use of excel and word sheets	XVII	27.01
17	Management of animal health project	XII	47.40

Conclusion

Thus, training of Veterinary Assistant Surgeons based on their needs will help them keep in pace with the fast changing industrial scenario. It will also help to build the status of veterinary profession in our society. Thus, it leads to larger representation of Veterinary officers in decision making bodies which will help in improving our infrastructure. Shifting of focus towards animal and basic sciences which are the current needs of government Veterinary officers will serve a lot to them and for the livelihood of the rural masses.

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