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Perceived in-service training needs of veterinary officers in northern state of Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to assess perceived in- service training needs of the Veterinary officers serving the state animal husbandry department in Northern state of Himachal Pradesh. Sixty-five field veterinarians responded positively to the online data collection request. The respondents were asked to express their training need on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (5 indicating higher intensity of training need). The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents were in their early to mid-phase of their professional career. "Advancements in Clinical Skills", "Gynaecological advancements", "Departmental Procedures and administration", "Disease treatment protocols" and " Diagnostic techniques/laboratory techniques" were the top most ranked subjects/ topics with training need indices of 0.98, 0.96, 0.95, 0.94, & 0.93 respectively. "Statistical & epidemiological software", "Human resource management", "Veterinary Epidemiology", "Farm animal management" & "ICT tools for Animal Husbandry Extension" were the bottom ranks with training need indices of 0.80, 0.84, 0.85, 0.85 and 0.86 respectively. The assessment of the training needs should be basis for planning appropriate in service training programmes to enhance the work efficiency of the state veterinarians.

Keywords: Training need assessment, veterinary officers, need index, Himachal Pradesh

Introduction

Himachal Pradesh is a northern Indian state in the Himalayas. The total livestock population of the state was pegged at 4.41 million with 1.34 million poultry birds in 20th Livestock census 2019 [1]. Veterinary Officers have to perform the dual duty of clinician as well as extensionist for the livestock farmers. The constant change in the recommended practices related to animal rearing like feeding regimes, disease diagnostic techniques, and treatments etc. warrant regular in -service trainings of the veterinarians, to keep them abreast with the latest professional updates. In the present situation, the major problem faced by the institutions of higher education is quality deficit when compared to that of international standards [2]. Various institutions like State Agriculture University, National Institute of Agriculture Extension Management (manage), National Academy of Agriculture Research Management, IVRI, NDRI etc. are constantly organising trainings for the veterinarians of the state. For an effective training programme, the identification of the training needs of the trainees is the first and foremost step. This will help in including and emphasising the subject topics/areas which have been dug out in the training need identification process. Consequently, the trainees will be more interested and attentive in the training programme, leading to effective execution of the same. So, effective training requires a clear picture of how the trainees will be using information and technology post-training in place of their current expertise before the training [3]. Stated that training must consists largely of well-organized opportunities for the participants to acquire necessary understanding and skill. The effectiveness of the trainings in terms of efficacy of veterinary officers is expected to increase this way and there will be minimal wastage in the efforts of the organisers. Farmers' training is directed towards improving their job efficiency and will improve their productivity which helps in enhancing their socio-economic livelihood [4]. For this to achieve veterinarians need to play proactive role and their training needs must be fulfilled at regular intervals [5]. In their study lent support to the provision of training and resources to assist veterinarians working with clients on small landholdings in Australia. There was no study found to have been conducted to assess the training needs of the Veterinary Officers serving in Himachal Pradesh state Animal Husbandry department. Keeping in view the facts, this study was undertaken to assess the training needs of the Veterinary Officers of the state in different aspects of job profile.

Materials and methods

The study was conducted through online medium of data collection i.e. Google forms during March-August 2020. The study area included whole of state. Sixty-five (about 17% of the total filled in posts) responded to the data collection request. The poor internet connectivity in tribal areas was one of the reason for low response rate. The training needs of veterinarians were identified in various aspects of their job profile. The twenty training topics were finalised after review of literature and consultation with the experts. The respondents were asked to measure their training need intensity on a scale of 1 to 5 (1- not at all needed; 5- most needed). The data regarding age, qualification etc. was also recorded. The scores obtained by all the respondents for any given topic were added together and dividing it by maximum obtainable score yielded the need index for that topic. The ranking of the topics was done based on training index for better prioritisation. The choice of the veterinarians regarding frequency of in service trainings was also recorded.

Training need index = Sum of obtained score for each topic

by all respondents / maximum obtainable score for each topic

Results and discussion

From table 1, 81.54% of the respondents were male veterinarians while rest 18.46% were females. Majority (50.77%) of the respondents fell into age group of below 35 years, followed by 47.69% in 35-50 years and rest in above 50 years. Thirty-eight respondents (58.46%) had completed their Master's degree in veterinary science in different disciplines, while 21 respondents (32.31%) had joined service only after Graduate degree. Six vets (10.77%) have attained PhD degree in Veterinary Science. About job experience, majority respondents (50.77%) are having job experience in range of 5-20 years, 25 respondents (38.46%) below 5 years, followed by 7 respondents (10.77%) having job experience more than 20 years. This signifies that majority of respondents were in their early to mid-level stage of their professional career. Fifty-one respondent veterinarians (78.46%) were serving Veterinary Hospitals, 7 (10.77%) in Veterinary polyclinics, 4 (6.15%) in Administrative Offices and 3 (4.62%) respondents in one or other kind of Livestock Farm under state animal husbandry department.

Table 1: Classification of respondents according to their Characteristics

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage	
Sex	Female	12	18.46
	Male	53	81.54
Age	Below 35	33	50.77
	35-50 Years	31	47.69
	More than 50	1	1.54
Qualification	BVSc & AH	21	32.31
	MVSc	38	58.46
	PhD	6	9.23
Job Experience	Up 5 Years	25	38.46
	5-20 years	33	50.77
	more than 20 years	7	10.77
Institution type (Place of Working)	Livestock Farm	3	4.62
	Veterinary Hospital	51	78.46
	Veterinary Polyclinic	7	10.77
	Administrative Office	4	6.15

Table 2: Training Need Intensity in different topics/subjects and ranking based on Need index

Training need intensity	Most needed (5)	Somewhat Needed (4)	Neutral (3)	Not needed (2)	Not at all (1)	Need Index	Ranking of Training subjects
Disease treatment Protocols	50	11	4	-	-	0.94	4
Farm animal management	28	27	9	1	-	0.85	17
Advancement in clinical skills	58	6	1	-	-	0.98	1
Veterinary Epidemiology	27	29	8	1	-	0.85	17
Gynaecological Advancements	57	5	2	1	-	0.96	2
Diagnostic techniques/laboratory techniques	48	11	6	-	-	0.93	5
Animal nutritional management	34	24	7	-	-	0.88	13
Update in emerging diseases	43	18	4	-	-	0.92	7
Project Report preparation	31	23	10	1	-	0.86	15
Statistical & epidemiological software	22	27	12	2	2	0.80	20
Extension techniques and services	32	27	4	1	1	0.87	14
Biosecurity	40	18	4	2	1	0.89	10
Disease outbreak management	40	19	5	-	1	0.90	8
Animal health regulation and laws	36	25	3	-	1	0.89	9
Vetero legal case management	47	14	3	-	1	0.93	6
Human resource management	29	27	6	2	1	0.84	19
Effective Communication	39	17	8	1	-	0.89	10
Public dealing	38	22	2	1	2	0.89	12
ICT tools for Animal Husbandry Extension	31	26	5	1	2	0.86	16
Departmental procedures and administration	53	9	2	1	-	0.95	3

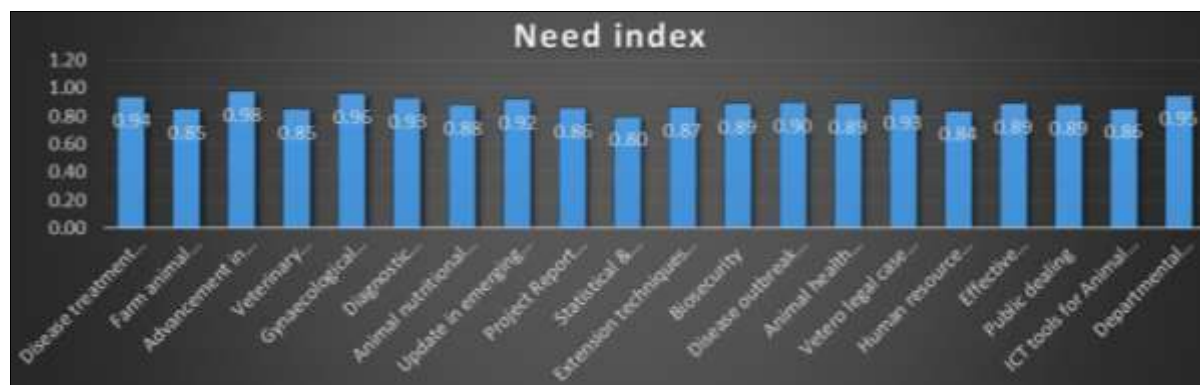


Fig 1: Need Indices of All Training Subject/Topics

Table 3: Intended in service- training Frequency indicated by respondents

Frequency	Once a year	Twice a year	Every 2 years	Every 5 years	According to nature of posting
No. of Respondents (%)	59(90.76%)	2(3.07%)	2(3.07%)	1(1.53%)	1(1.53%)

The job profile of the veterinarians serving in state animal husbandry department does not only include livestock treatment service but a plethora of other role and responsibilities also. Perceived training needs in extra professional areas was also included in the study. The responses of the respondents regarding intensity of need in different areas/ topics has been summarised in Table 2 and represented graphically in Fig 1. The need index of each topic/subject has been calculated and ranking has been done on its basis. "Advancements in Clinical Skills" was ranked as no. 1 training need topic with need index of 0.98, "Gynaecological advancements" as rank 2 with need index of 0.96 followed by "Departmental Procedures and administration", "Disease treatment protocols" and "Diagnostic techniques/laboratory techniques" with training need indices of 0.95, 0.94, & 0.93 respectively. Among these top five ranks, four subject areas belonged to professional aspect of the job while one to the management/ administration aspect. In a similar study conducted in Karnataka state, advancement in clinical skills, update in emerging diseases and diagnostic techniques/laboratory techniques, were the major training needs of the Veterinary officers [6]. Diagnosis and treatment of gastrointestinal disorders & common infectious diseases, management of fracture cases, caesarean section and haematology and judging of buffaloes were most needed training subareas as reported by veterinarians in Haryana state [7]. Similar results on perceived training needs also have been reported in a study in Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh [8]. Similar training need of the end users were reported in a study conducted in in Banda District of Uttar Pradesh [9]. "Statistical & epidemiological software", "Human resource management", "Veterinary Epidemiology", "Farm animal management" & "ICT tools for Animal Husbandry Extension" were the bottom ranks with training need indices of 0.80, 0.84, 0.85, 0.85 and 0.86 respectively. However, importance of these topics cannot be neglected based on these ranks, but prioritization may be done accordingly.

From Table 3, a very high majority of respondents (90.76%) vouched for at least one refresher training per year. A single respondent endorsed for in service training with every change in nature of duties to be performed by state veterinarians. In a study, it was found that majority of respondents underwent only less than five trainings in their career [10]. The overall study revealed that state veterinarians perceive a very high degree of training needs to further hone their skills and work

improve efficiency.

Conclusion

The in service training of Veterinary officers based on their measured needs will help them keep in pace with the fast changing job requirement. It will also help to build the status of veterinary profession in our society. Training is one of important component of human capital development. So mapping of training needs becomes foremost priority before organisation of any programme. The training programmes should be customised/ tailor made to meet the requirements reflected in need assessment. This will help in improving standard of veterinary services available to the poor livestock keepers of the state. The various stake holders involved should consider the mentioned areas while planning any continuous educational programmes for field veterinarians. This will encourage their active participation and help in bringing out best from them.

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