



Need for Suitable Strategies for Livestock Service Delivery by Gopalamitras : The Case of East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

A study was purposively conducted following exploratory research design in East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh to study the profile of livestock farmers and their level of satisfaction on livestock services availed from Gopalamitras. A total of 150 livestock farmers were interviewed for the study with the help of pre-tested semi-structured interview schedule. A high percentage of livestock farmers were satisfied with the services such as AI, PD, treatment, preventive vaccination and deworming services provided by the Gopalamitras. The farmers were also satisfied with the number of visits made by Gopalamitras, venue of the service, availability and accessibility to the services, timely service, quality of the service, behaviour of the Gopalamitra and the fee charged by the Gopalamitras. The general impression of the study is that Gopalamitras were delivering unauthorized services to the livestock farmer for sustaining their livelihood. This study has consistently suggested that suitable mechanism need to be developed for streamlining animal health service delivery of Gopalamitras.

Key words: Gopalamitras, service delivery; satisfaction

Introduction

Livestock sector plays an important role in socio-economic development of rural households in India. About 70 per cent of rural households are dependent on livestock for income (Chawla et al., 2005). Improvement in livestock production is, therefore, an important pathway for increasing the income of marginal and small farmers and landless labourers (Venkatasubramanian and Rao, 2011). There is lot of scope to increase the productivity of livestock thereby increasing the income of the millions of resource poor people who depend upon livestock for their livelihoods. The delivery of services in animal health and production is considered as

a main factor for successful livestock development (Kleeman, 1999). This poor delivery of livestock services was attributed to inadequate man power in the State departments of Animal Husbandry, major stakeholders in providing livestock services to the livestock farmers. Majority of farmers preferred private para-veterinary practitioners as they reach farmer's door step at any time when farmers called them. But majority of large farmers (42%) preferred services of veterinarian of the dairy cooperative as they had large livestock population (Mirajkar et al, 2011). The livestock keepers use CAHWs more frequently than any other service provider (Peeling and Holden, 2004).The preference of

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service providers (veterinary officer and private practitioner) depend upon the location, distance, livestock holding and capacity to pay and quality of services (Kathiravan et al., 2009 and Mirajkar et al., 2011).

Methodology

The study was purposively conducted by following exploratory research design in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. Multistage random sampling technique was followed for selection of the respondents. There are three divisions in the selected district i.e., Kakinada,

Amalapuram and Rajahmundry. Two mandals from each division of East Godavari District were selected randomly and from each mandal one village was selected with the condition that the village should receive livestock services from Gopalmitras. Twenty five livestock farmers were selected randomly from each selected villages. Thus, a total of 150 livestock farmers with 50 livestock farmers from each division were selected for this study. The level of satisfaction of livestock farmers on delivery of livestock services by Gopalmitras was assessed from the livestock farmers through an interview schedule specially prepared for this purpose in three point continuum scale.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of livestock farmers

S.No.	Variables	Majority	Mean	Range
1	Age (yrs)	Middle aged	45.86	22 – 85
2	Education	Illiterates		Illiterate to Graduate
3	Family size	Small (2 – 4)	5	2 – 19
4	Primary occupation	Agriculture		
5	Community	BC		
6	Land holding (acres)	Landless	1.68	0.3 – 7
7	Herd size	Medium (3 – 5)	3.46	1 – 16
8	Experience in livestock rearing (yrs)	> 20 yrs	18.6	0.42 – 50
9	Milk prodn/ household(lt.)	Medium (2.1 –11)	6.15	0.5 – 30
10	Milk consumption /household(lt.)	Up to 1 litre	1.48	0.3 – 8
11	Milk sale/household(lt.)	6 – 15 litres	5.79	1 – 28
12	Marketing agency	Visakha dairy societies		
13	Income through dairying/ yr (Rs.)	Low (Upto Rs.25,000)	49,710	3,600 - 3,72,000
14	Annual household income (Rs.)	1 – 2 lakhs	1, 47,165	12,400 – 6,81,600

Profile of the Livestock Farmers : A glance at the Table 1 that the profile of the livestock farmers indicated that majority of the livestock farmers were middle aged, illiterate and landless dairy farmers living in a nuclear family belonging to backward community. Majority of the livestock farmers were dependent on agriculture with dairying as subsidiary occupation. Majority of the livestock farmers (58%) owned only buffaloes and about 16 per cent of the livestock farmers owned both cattle and buffaloes. The mean herd size was 3.46 and they had upto 10 years of experience in livestock rearing. The average household milk production, consumption and sale among the livestock farmers per day were 6.15 lt, 1.48 lt and 5.79 lt respectively. The mean annual

income from livestock farming was about Rs.49, 710 with majority of the livestock farmers falling under low income category from the livestock. The average annual income of the family being Rs.1, 47, 165.

Livestock Farmers Availing and not Availing Services :

Data from the Table 2 shows that sixty six per cent of the livestock farmers availed services viz., AI, PD, treatment, vaccination and deworming services from Gopalmitras. Only 10 per cent of the livestock farmers discontinued availing services such as AI, PD and other treatment services because of rectal bleeding during AI, PD. Table 2 reveals that about twenty three per cent of the livestock farmers never availed services from Gopalmitras. The reasons for

not availing the services from Gopalamitras were their less knowledge and less trust on them. So, they preferred availing services from the veterinarian or paraveterinarian of department of animal husbandry for availing services.

Table 2: Livestock farmers availing and not availing services

S.No.	Category	N	%	
1.	Availing services	99	66.00	
2.	Not availing services	Discontinued availing services	16	10.67
		Never availed services	35	23.33
	Total	150	100.00	

Satisfaction of Livestock Farmers with Livestock Services

Table 3: Satisfaction with livestock services provided by Gopalamitras: N = 115

S.No	Livestock services	Respondents availed services	Respondents satisfied (%)
1	AI	86	59.13
2	PD	51	44.35
3	Therapeutic	69	54.78
4	Follow up	62	48.69
5	Deworming	20	17.39
6	Vaccination	56	49.70

Data in table 3 clearly indicates that about three-fourth of the livestock farmers were satisfied with AI services provided by Gopalamitras which supports the study of Sastry & Raju (2008) in Andhra Pradesh where 85 per cent of the farmers reported that they were satisfied with the breeding services provided by Gopalamitras. Hardly one farmer (0.87%) out of 115 farmers interviewed expressed his dissatisfaction over the venue of service of Gopalamitras. The data depict in table 4 reveal that around ninety per cent of the livestock farmers interviewed were satisfied with timely services of Gopalamitras. This finding differed from that of Ahuja et al. (2003a) who reported that nearly one-third (28%) of users were not satisfied with the time they waited to receive livestock services in Orissa. It can be inferred from Table 4 that around 92 per cent of the livestock farmers expressed their satisfaction over the quality of services delivered by Gopalamitras. The findings are in line with the findings of Ahuja et al. (2003b) who reported that more than 80% of the farmers were satisfied with the quality of veterinary services and the fee collected was also reasonable for the service at home in Orissa. From Table 4 its' evident that nearly seventy per cent of the livestock

farmers were satisfied with service charges for availing services from Gopalamitras. The findings of the study are also similar to the findings of Sastry & Raju (2008) who reported that majority of the farmers (89%) were satisfied only for the AI, first aid, vaccination and deworming services and about 70% of the farmers were satisfied with the charges paid for availing treatment services in Andhra Pradesh provided by Gopalamitras.

S.No	Aspects of service delivery	Satisfied (%)
1	No. of visits	73.04
2	Venue of the service	99.13
3	Accessibility to the services	82.67
4	Timely service	87.96
5	Quality of services	81.87
6	Behavior of Gopalamitra	91.33
7	Charges for services	69.57

Conclusions

The result of the study reveals that the livestock farmers were middle aged, illiterate and landless/ dairying as secondary occupation with 3-5 bovines belonged to BC. Average annual income from dairying was up to Rs. 25,000. The general impression of the study is that a very high percentage of the livestock farmers were satisfied with services rendered by Gopalmitras both authorised and unauthorised services. The study concluded that Gopalmitras are providing livestock services at the door step of the livestock farmers to the satisfaction of the higher percentage in the aspect of their behavior, quality and timeliness in delivering services. From the overall study it can be concluded that Gopalmitras are a critical element

in the overall livestock service delivery system by extending the outreach of services to the unreached (resource poor areas). However, the realization of their full potential requires a strong linkage and support system for the purpose of ethical and professional service delivery. There is the need to strengthen the authorized service delivery in the aspect of increasing their number of visits and streamlining the service charges. Policy should reorient to give special emphasis for delivering vaccination and deworming service to the livestock farmers by Gopalmitras. This study has consistently suggested that suitable strategies need to be developed for livestock service delivery mechanism of Gopalmitras to sustain their livelihood by good income but at the same time preventing them to attend to unauthorized services.

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