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Perceived Job Performance and Constraints Hindering Performance of Krishi Vigyan Kendras in Mizoram

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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of any organisation depends on the performance of the manpower engaged. This study was conducted in three KVKs of Mizoram *viz.,* Kolasib, Lunglei and Aizwal with the objective to assess the perceived job performance of the scientific and technical staff of the KVKs and constraints faced by the staff which hinder their performance. Majority (66.67%) of staff were found to be in medium job performance category. Performance was found to be most effective in presenting and discussing field problems to farmers, conducting need based training programmes, attending official meetings regularly and communicating solutions to farmers on field problems but found to be low in getting samples tested (fertilizers /plant protection chemical /seed / soil & water), providing advisory through ICT and ensuring that rural youths member within the KVK got a stable and reliable job. No special budgetary provision for conduct of demonstration units, delay in releasing salary and lack of man power were the major constraints reported.

Keywords: KVK, Job Performance

INTRODUCTION

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) is the only institution at the district level in India for technological backstopping in agriculture and allied sectors. As for today, KVK's mandate is Technology Assessment and Demonstration for its wider application and to enhance Capacity Development (TADA-CD). The works of KVK as frontline extension system helps to assess and refine (if needed) the newly released technologies, demonstrate the proven ones and train farmers and extension functionaries on the same. While some of the KVKs have been effectively contributing to the technology development and promotion process, many are plagued with several problems. Mizoram KVKs like other KVKs in the country play an important role in helping the farming communities through their set of objectives and activities by providing training, supplying necessary materials to the needy farmers and equipped them with the latest technological practices. The success of the initiative depends on how effectively the manpower engaged performs the jobs and assignments. This paper examines the perceived level of effectiveness of the job performance of the KVK staff as well as the constraints hampering performance.

METHODOLOGY

There are eight KVKs in Mizoram, out of which seven KVKs are under the State Government of Mizoram and one under Central Agricultural University, Imphal, Manipur. Based upon their years of establishment, three KVKs *viz.* KVK Kolasib (1979), KVK Lunglei (1995) and KVK Aizawl (2006) were purposively selected for the present study. All the scientific and technical staff *viz.* Programme Coordinator, Subject Matter Specialists (SMSs) and Farm Managers attached to the three KVKs were the subject of the study.

Table 1: Number of respondents of the study

Designation	Districts		
	Kolasib	Lunglei	Aizawl
Programme Coordinator	1	1	1
Subject Matter Specialists	4	4	5
Farm Manager	1	1	0
Total	18		

In this study job performance was operationalized as the degree to which KVK scientists and technical staff accomplish the tasks assigned to them in terms of quality and quantity. The scale for measuring Job Performance developed by Reddy (1990) was used. The scale consists of seven components *viz.,* planning, education, supply and service, supervision, coordination, office work and evaluation. Fifty-three job performance items were administered on three point continuum *viz.,* most efficient, efficient and not efficient with a score of 3, 2 and 1, respectively. The scores ranging from 53 to 159 formed the lowest and highest scores possible on the scale. Data were collected using pre-tested interview schedule during 2014-15.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the respondents: Majority of the respondents (72.22%) were middle aged. There was more number of male staff (55.56%) than the female (44.44%). Omoregbee & Ajayi (2009) and Hasan & Laiq (2014) also reported that more than half of the agriculture extension workers were male. Half of respondents had Master's degree in agriculture and allied disciplines, followed by 38.89 per cent and 11.11 per cent of respondents having Ph. D and B.Sc. respectively.

The result was in line with Jyothi (2006) indicating that majority of the staff KVKs were M.Sc. (Agri.) graduates. Majority of the respondents (61.11%) were found to be in the medium level of job experience of 3 to 6 years. Jyothi (2006) also reported that majority of the university managed KVKs had total experience up to five years. 83.34 per cent respondents were native of Mizoram in which 27.78 per cent were serving in their native district.

Table 2: Profile of the respondents

n=18

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Young (less than 29 years)	2	11.11
	Middle (39 to 43 years)	13	72.22
	Old (above 43years)	3	16.67
Educational Qualification	B. Sc. (Agri/Horti.)	2	11.11
	M. Sc. (Agri/Horti.)	9	50.00
	Ph. D	7	38.89
Sex	Male	10	55.56
	Female	8	44.44
Job Experience	Low (less than 3years)	4	22.22
	Medium (3 to 6 years)	11	61.11
	High (above 6 years)	3	16.67
Native Place	Same district	5	27.78
	Other districts within Mizoram	10	55.56
	Other state	3	16.67

Job Performance: Majority (66.67%) of the scientific and technical staff were found to be in medium job performance category; followed by equal proportion of low (16.67%) and high (16.67%) level of job performance. The result was in agreement with the work Meena & Singh (2003) and Okwoche & Asogwa (2012).

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to job performance

n=18

Category	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Low (Up to 88.11)	3	16.67		
Medium (88.12 to 118.77)	12	66.67	103.44	15.34
High (118.78 & above)	3	16.67		

Component wise analysis of job performance: There were six job performance components studied. The items under each components are presented in Table 4 along with the total score given for each item by the entire respondents and percentage of the score obtained to the maximum obtainable score.

Table 4: Item wise scoring of various aspects of job performance

Job Aspects	Total score	Percentage
Planning		
Studying local situation and identifying problems	41	75.93
Selecting farmers and farms for conducting trials	39	72.22
Preparing simple teaching aids (charts, models etc.)	38	70.37
Estimating inputs requirements of farmers	39	72.22
Planning targets for KVK staff in each activity	36	66.67
Planning for the distribution of printed literature	37	68.52
Preparing farm production plans consulting farmers and extension personnel	35	64.81
Total	**265**	**70.11**

Planning: The perceived efficiency of the staff in different planning items ranged from 75.93 to 64.81 per cent with the item studying local situation and identifying problems, selecting farmers and farms for conducting trials, estimating input requirement of farmers receiving the highest score.

Table 5: Score of education

Education	Total score	Percentage
Demonstrating necessary technical skills and knowledge to farmers/field level extension personnel	41	75.93
Vocational training to rural youths to generate and promote self employment ability	35	64.81
Conducting need based training programmes	42	77.78
Conducting group meetings for farmers	34	62.92
Contacting farmers on their farms and homes for transfer of technology	38	70.37
Convincing farmers regarding results of farm trials	40	74.07
Presenting and discussing field problems to farmers	43	79.63
Communicating solutions to farmers on field problems	41	75.93
Total	**314**	**72.69**

Education: The staff's efficiency was found highest in presenting and discussing field problems to farmers (79.63%) and conducting need based training programme (77.78%) (Table 5). The items vocational training to rural youths to generate and promote self employment ability (64.81%) and conducting group meetings for farmers as least efficient (62.92%) received relatively low score. Importance needs to be given towards conducting more meetings with the farmers to give them chance to discuss their issues and views regarding their field related matters. The staff also need to be more efficient towards helping the rural youths to be able to create their own stable and reliable enterprises by developing their skills and give technical guidance through proper trainings.

Chander (2015) mentioned that more emphasis should be given towards skill development training for rural youth by the KVKs and the process of skill development can be strengthened by establishing linkages of KVKs with National Skill Development Council.

Table 6: Score on supply and service

Supply and service	Total score	Percentage
Arranging inputs for trials	37	68.52
Distributing subsidized inputs to clients	31	57.41
Advising input agencies to keep sufficient stocks of inputs	32	59.26
Supplying printed extension literature to clients	40	74.07
Guiding farmers on obtaining farm credit	31	57.41
Distributing high yielding variety (HYV) seeds to farmers	32	59.26
Getting soil and water samples tested	26	48.15
Getting fertilizers samples tested	22	40.74
Getting seed samples tested	24	44.44
Getting plant protection chemical samples tested	26	48.15
Giving need based advisory services through ICT	22	40.74
Giving vaccination to farm animals	30	55.56
Helping farmers in profitable marketing of their produce	37	68.52
Total	**390**	**55.56**

Supply and service: Efficiency was high in supplying printed extension literatures to clients (74.07%), arranging inputs for trials (68.52 %) and helping farmers in profitable marketing of their produce (68.52 %) (Table 6). Whereas the efficiency of the staff in getting various samples (soil, water, seed, chemicals, fertilizers etc) tested were perceived to be low. Due to lack of proper ICT facilities and proficiency of the KVK as well as clients, providing agro-advisory services through ICT is efficient. These inefficiencies may be attributed to lack of equipment and facilities as well as lack of updated skill on the part of the staff.

Table 7: Score on supervision

Supervision	Total score	Percentage
Visiting all the KVK field circles on a specified schedule	35	64.81
Ascertaining that farmers are being visited regularly in their fields by the KVK	36	66.67
Ensuring that farmers are receiving appropriate technical recommendations	39	72.22
Ensuring that farmers are adapting practices recommended	38	70.37
Ensuring that rural youths member within the KVK got a stable and reliable job	27	50.00
Ascertaining that incentives given to farmers are used properly	36	66.67
Total	**211**	**65.12**

Supervision: In this component, the staffs have expressed higher efficiency appropriate technical recommendations (72.22%) and relatively lower efficiency was recorded in visiting all the KVK field circles on a specified schedule (64.81%) and ensuring that rural youth members within the KVK got a stable and reliable job (50.00%) (Table 7). It was clear that they were efficient in disseminating the new technology to the farmers but still lack efficiency in helping the rural youths to get a stable and reliable job. According to CAG (2008), only 0.34 per cent of the total rural youth trained were able to gain self employment.

Table 8: Score on co-operation

Co-operation	Total score	Percentage
Enlisting co-ordination from input agencies in making inputs available in right time	31	57.41
Mustering help from other developmental departments whenever necessary	34	62.96
Guiding and counseling farmers groups regarding agriculture	36	66.67
Developing good rapport with clients i.e. farmers, rural youths and extension workers	39	72.22
Involving farmers in extension work in greater numbers	40	74.07
Convincing clients to subscribe for agricultural magazines	30	55.56
Total	**210**	**64.81**

Co-operation: The level of staff's efficiency towards involving farmers in extension work (74.07%), developing good rapport with clients *i.e.* farmers, rural youths and extension workers (72.22%) and guiding and counseling farmers groups regarding agriculture (66.67%) is good (Table 8). Co-operation among different stakeholders including the clients is one of the most important criteria for an organization to do well. The KVKs seems to be doing well in this area but nevertheless need more effort for the cooperation to flourish and include more relevant stakeholders.

Table 9: Score on official work

Official work	Total score	Percentage
Maintaining office records and registers up to date	38	70.37
Maintaining tour daily	30	55.56
Submitting routine reports to higher authorities	40	74.07
Attending official meetings regularly	42	77.78
Ensuring that subordinates submit report as per time schedule	38	70.37
Preparing proposal for needed inputs	38	70.37
Reporting on the stock position of inputs available with different agencies	30	55.56
Reporting on the coverage crops/farm animal under high yielding varieties/improved breeds	35	64.81
Total	**291**	**67.36**

Official work: It can be seen that the staff had expressed high efficiency towards attending official meetings regularly (77.78%), submitting routine reports to higher authorities (74.07%), ensuring that subordinates submit their report as per time (70.37 %), preparing proposal for needed inputs, (70.37 %) and maintaining office records and registers up to date (70.37 %) (Table 9). The efficiency was relatively low in reporting on the coverage crops/farm animal under high yielding varieties/ improved breeds (64.81%), maintaining tour daily (55.56 %) and reporting on the stock position of inputs

available with different agencies (55.56 %). These low inefficiencies may be attributed to lack of fund for travelling, too much reporting work and lack of facilities to be highlighted in the later section.

Table 10: Score on evaluation

Evaluation	Total score	Percentage
Assessing whether the targets are reached by KVK staff and if not, why?	37	68.52
Ascertaining the success of field days	37	68.52
Evaluating the success of training, group meetings and other extension activities.	36	66.67
Knowing whether the inputs are actually used or not	38	70.37
Evaluating the efficiency of other field level extension personnel in implementing extension activities	33	61.11

Evaluation: The staff efficiency in various evaluation items range from 70.37 per cent to 61.11 percent. Though the KVK staff perceives themselves to be efficient in evaluation of their programmes and activities, but they are not much into evaluating the efficiency of other extension personnel who were and are their potential clients (Table 10). If the job components are taken into consideration, it is observed that efficiency was perceived to be highest in case of education (72.69%) followed by planning (70.11%). Low efficiency was observed in supply and service (55.56%). Figure 1 depicts the component wise perceived efficiency of the KVK staff. Though the KVKs staff perceive that are doing well in Education and Planning, there is still scope of improvement. Emphasis needs to be given in Supply and Service arena in capacity building of the staff as well as making necessary arrangement for provision of inputs, facilities and linkage.

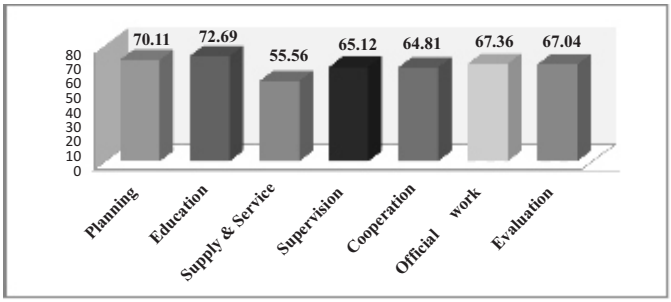

Figure 1: Component wise percentage score of job performance

Constraints faced by the KVK scientific and technical staff: The respondents were asked to express the constraints faced by them related to their job. 16 constraint items were identified which were ranked according to the number of respondents having expressed that item. Details are presented in Table 11. No special budgetary provision for conduct of demonstration was the constraint expressed by majority (77.78%) of the respondents. KVK scheme is being funded from the plan budget since its inception (1974) but the funds required for efficient functioning are often not available to the required extent. No externally funded project (50.00%) and lack of travelling allowances for follow up activity (44.44%) were also expressed as constraint. Paucity of budget was also reported by Jyothi (2006) and Pant and Singh (2014). ICAR constituted High Power committee (ICAR, 2014) also took notice of this matter and therefore trying to project a part of the expenditure under Non Plan instead of booking the entire expenditure under plan (e.g. salary, TA, HRD *etc*.). But Chander (2015) expressed that there is over dependence of KVKs on ICAR funds currently, lack of funds for off campus training and on-farm trials is a routine excuse in majority of KVKs. He emphasized that KVKs must seek long-term funding relationship with local constituencies, such as NGOs, and with national and international organizations to overcome budget problems.

Delay in releasing salary was another major problem expressed by 72.22 per cent respondents, mostly from the State managed KVKs. There are times they did not received salary for three to four consecutive months which was a big factor for demotivation and demoralisation. 22.22 per cent feel that pay scales do not commensurate the workload handled by them. With ever growing and quantum of workload, the existing six SMSs find it difficult to cope up with their responsibilities. Lack of man power (61.11%) was one of the major constraints. Insufficient staff as constraint was also mentioned by Jyothi (2006). Excessive reporting works (55.56%) of the projects and activities leave the staff with no time for actual field work. ICAR constituted High Power Committee recommended four additional posts of SMSs should be created in each KVK to do proper justice to the workload and also to increase the total strength of KVK staff to 22 against 16 at present (ICAR, 2014).

Lack of location specific and need-based technologies transfer to clientele (55.56%) is another problem. Many recommended technologies (in the form of planting materials, other inputs, farming system etc) do not fit into the local needs and situations. Pant and Singh (2014) also expressed non availability of location specific and problem oriented technologies as a constraint 50 per cent of the KVK scientific and technical staff had expressed lengthy official procedures as constraints because for getting any financial approvals one has to follow many processes resulting in wasting valuable time and delayed the work plan. Gaikwad & Gunjal (2000) and Subhashchandra (2007) also reported this constraint. Another 50 per cent respondents feel that KVK similar a scheme based initiative may leave them jobless after the project ends.

Lack of adequate training (38.89%) was another constraint expressed because with ever changing situation in the field of agriculture the staff needed to update their knowledge and skills in order to serve their clients. Jyothi (2006) also expressed this constraint. Staff does attend training programmes but only few have practical implications back at the KVK. Poor office facilities (33.33%), lack of essential teaching and communication equipments/audio-visual aids (22.22%). Old furniture, equipments are not replaced. At the same time laboratories and other sample testing facilities are not properly furnished. Lack of ICT tools for communication and technology transfer was also expressed. effective dissemination of information to different stakeholders. Some 16.67 per cent expressed frequent transfer as constraint because sometimes higher authority without considering the ongoing work used to transfer the staff thereby creating unnecessary problem to the departed organization. Gaikwad and Gunjal (2000) also mentioned frequent transfer as constraint. Another 16.67 per cent staff had expressed excess bossism of superior officials as constraint.

Table 11: Constraints faced by the KVK scientific and technical staff

n=18

Constraints	Frequency & %	Rank
Lengthy official procedures	9 (50.00)	V
Frequent transfers	3 (16.67)	X
Excessive reporting work	10 (55.56)	IV
Special budgetary provision for conduct of demonstration	14 (77.78)	I
Delay in releasing salary	13 (72.22)	II
Lack of location specific technologies	10 (55.56)	IV
Lack of essential teaching and communication equipments/audio-visual aids	4 (22.22)	IX
Lack of travelling allowances for follow up activity	8 (44.44)	VI
Poor residential quarter facilities	7 (38.89)	VII
Poor office facilities	6 (33.33)	VIII
Excess bossism of superior officials	3 (16.67)	X
Lack of adequate training to the staff concern	7 (38.89)	VII
No externally funded project	9 (50.00)	V
Lack of man-power	11 (61.11)	III
Job insecurity	9 (50.00)	V
Low pay scales	4 (22.22)	IX

CONCLUSION

KVKs as frontline extension system have immense role and responsibility towards the farming community. Majority (66.67%) of the scientific and technical staff of the selected KVKs had medium job performance indicating a tremendous need of increasing performance. To improve performance, attention needs to be given in areas of supply & service and coordination & linkage among the stakeholders. Many constraints are faced by the staff. Some of the important suggestions given by the KVK scientific and technical staff to improve performance and counter the constraints include timely release of salary and promotional opportunities for the State managed KVKs, increasing the technical man power for all the KVKs, timely release of inputs for OFT/FLD for efficient and successful programmes, provision of new laboratory facilities to respective subject *viz.* soil science, animal science etc, provision of better ICT facilities and training for their effective use, were. Vocational training for rural youths to increase employability and entrepreneurship development is one area requiring major focus.

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