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Assessment of Clientele Satisfaction of Selected KVKs in Mizoram

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ABSTRACT

Clientele satisfaction is a major indicator for the effectiveness of any service rendered and performance of an organization. The study was conducted to assess the clientele satisfaction level of services provided by three selected KVKs of Mizoram viz, Kolasib, Lunglei and Aizwal. A total of 80 farmer clientele and 10 extension functionaries were the respondents of the study. Majority of the clientele (60.00%) had expressed medium level of satisfaction. Satisfaction level was found highest in customer service (71.51%) followed by quality (68.24%), relevancy (59.44%) and usefulness (56.03%). Education level of the respondents was found to have negative and significant association with their level of satisfaction. The clientele found the farm visits convenient, subject matters well organized and services compatible with their farming system. The major contributors for low satisfaction were lack of information on market and less & inefficient vocational training and these are the areas where intervention is required to improve the satisfaction level of the clientele.

1. Introduction

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has a well-established frontline extension system in the form of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) for effective dissemination of new technologies for the benefit of farmers in the country. 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. Agricultural extension services have seen an increased emphasis on measuring quality of programmes through client satisfaction surveys (Radhakrishna, 2002). Like other extension service providers, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) should have an increased emphasis on measuring quality of programmes and activities through client satisfaction survey because client's satisfaction is said to be a key indicator in determining the performance level of the organization.

Customer satisfaction is the most important element for developing and sustaining organizational priorities and practices (Elias *et al.*, 2016). Client satisfaction or dissatisfaction is obtained of difference between client expectations and the quality which he has received (Oliver, 1997). The measurement of client satisfaction is considered as internal actions that shows the orientation of organization towards quality (Eccles and Durand, 1997). With these views in mind, the present study was conducted to find out the level of clientele satisfaction over the performance of selected KVKs in Mizoram.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in three districts of Mizoram viz, Kolasib, Lunglei and Aizawl. The respondents were the clientele of the KVKs of the respective districts. The list of all the clientele of the KVKs who have availed one or the other services of the KVK in the last three years (from the time of data collection) was procured. 30 nos. of clients from each district comprising of farmer, farm-women, rural youths and extension functionaries was selected based on proportionate stratified random sampling.

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For measuring clientele satisfaction, a scale developed by Saravanan (2003) was adopted for the study. Clientele satisfaction is operationalized as the degree of satisfaction of the client in respect of relevancy, quality, usefulness and customer (client) service of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs). There were 26 statements and these statements were divided into four dimensions in respect of relevancy, quality, usefulness and customer service. The responses were collected on a three point continuum viz, agree, somewhat agree and disagree with a weightage of 2, 1 and 0 for positive statements and reverse scoring for negative statements. Based on the scores obtained by the respondents in each dimension, they were categorized into three categories taking the mean and standard deviation as measure of check. For each clientele satisfaction item, clientele satisfaction index (CSI) was calculated using the formula:

$$Index (CSI) = \frac{Obtained\ score}{Maximum\ possible\ score} \times 100$$

Data were collected by personal interview using structured interview schedule in the first quarter of 2015.

3. Results and Discussions

Level of clientele satisfaction

Majority of the clientele (60.00%) had expressed medium level of satisfaction while 22.22 per cent and 17.78 per cent had expressed low and high level of satisfaction, respectively. Details are presented in Table 1. Debnath (2012) reported that the clients of public agricultural extension services had expressed high (38.33%) client satisfaction; followed by medium (36.67%) and low (25.00%) level of client satisfaction. Ganpatet *et al.* (2014) reported moderate farmers' overall satisfaction with extension. Study in Ethiopia showed that about 55% of the farmers were satisfied with the extension services (Elias *et al.*, 2016).

Dimension wise analysis of clientele satisfaction:

The scale adopted for the study comprises of four dimensions of clientele satisfaction.

Dimension wise findings are presented in Table 2 and details are discussed hereunder.

Relevancy of KVK services:

The item wise analysis of relevancy of KVK service from that client satisfaction item was high for the items - compatible with the overall farming system (85.00%), farmers need based (81.67%), timely input availability (63.33%), but relatively lower in distributing relevant literature (48.89%), services exhibit more practicability (43.89%) and provides relevant market information as 33.89 per cent. Ahmad *et al.* (2012), reported that majority of clients (63.42%) opined that training programme was fully based on their needs and problems. Even though the clients perceived KVK service as compatible to their farming system and need based but they expect to receive more relevant market information and linkage to proper marketing channel where they could sell their produce in time because situation used to arise when they have to sell their produce as distressed sale thereby getting lesser amount of return from their produce.

Quality of KVK services:

The item wise analysis of quality of KVK service indicated that satisfaction level were high on organization of subject matter presented (85.56%), ensure unbiased information (78.33%), training and communication support and timely services with 64.44 per cent, information provided is up to date (59.44%) and appropriate teaching methods (57.22%). The study conducted by Mankar *et al.* (2006) indicated that majority of trainees were fairly satisfied about fulfilment of their expectation regarding contents and quality of presentations from the training courses. Wayuaet *et al.* (2014) revealed that majority of the clients were satisfied with the technologies provided. From the results it is clear that to increase the satisfaction, KVK needs to improve their quality by employing better and effective teaching methods, by providing new and useful information and ensuring timely services.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their level of clientele satisfaction (N=90)

Sl. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
1.	Low (Up to 29.01)	20	22.22	33.18	4.16
2.	Medium (29.02 to 37.33)	54	60.00		
3.	High (37.34 & above)	16	17.78		

Usefulness of KVK services:

In the item wise analysis of usefulness of KVK service, most of the clientele had expressed their satisfaction on help to solve farming problems (67.78%), develops new forms of local institutions (67.22%), equal proportion of impart information on routine old technologies and provide more help to make timely decision with 65.56 per cent, creates general agricultural development awareness (59.44%), but less satisfied with promotes eco-friendly and sustainable technology transfer (39.44%) and develops vocational efficiency (27.22%). The results showed that the clients have not received much vocational training and even if imparted were of less efficiency. So, more training should be provided to build up their skill, confidence and to be able to apply to the real life situation and most importantly to see the real efficiency of the usefulness of KVK services though KVK is skilled in the routine activities.

Customer service of KVK:

The clientele had expressed high satisfaction on items like farm visits are convenient for farmers (88.89%), friendly and courteous (81.11%), KVK were accountable to farmers (76.67%), followed by KVK scientific and technical staff are motivated to serve (68.89%), KVK staff take care on farmers (67.78%), services are flexible in nature (63.33%) and ensure regular training and continuous farm visits (55.00%) as least satisfied.

From the results it is evident that the clients were happy with the visit by the KVK scientific and technical staff in their own fields, this has brought encouragement and motivation to the farmers. Besides this, the friendly and courteous behaviour and client accountability of the KVK service were also expressed as high satisfaction. But, KVK should improve their client service by providing more training and follow up services.

If the overall components are taken into consideration, then it is observed that highest satisfaction was observed in case of Customer service (71.51%) while lowest satisfaction was observed in usefulness of the service (56.03%). Saravanan and Veerabhadraih (2003) indicated that two-fifths of clientele of NGOs and agricultural consultancies clientele had high level of satisfaction. More than two fifth of public extension clientele had low level of satisfaction on relevancy, quality, usefulness and customer service. Details are presented in Figure 1. The probable reason for high satisfaction on customer service is the opportunity KVK their clients to contact them through regular visit to their farm, this can be attributed as a motivational support to the clients and also they get a chance to discuss problems related to their field situation. The KVK scientific and technical staff was also highly friendly and courteous to their clients. On the other hand, the clients expressed less satisfaction towards usefulness of the service because the clients were not yet able to utilize the recommended technology to the extent because of less number of trainings, lack of proper inputs and proper follow up.

Figure 1. Dimension wise percentage score of clientele satisfaction items



Table 2. Dimension and item wise clientele satisfaction score

Sl. No.	Clientele satisfaction statements	Total score	CSI
I.	Relevancy of KVK services		
1.	Distributes relevant literature	88	48.89
2.	Services are compatible with the overall farming system	153	85.00
3.	Services exhibit more practicability	79	43.89
4.	Timely availability of relevant inputs is difficult	114	63.33
5.	Provides relevant market information	61	33.89
6.	Services are farmers need based	147	81.67
	Total	642	59.44
II	Quality of KVK services		
1.	Information provided is up to date	107	59.44
2.	Ensure unbiased information	141	78.33
3.	Employs appropriate teaching methods	103	57.22
4.	Training and communication support	116	64.44
5.	Subject matter presented is well organized	154	85.56
6.	Ensure timely services	116	64.44
	Total	737	68.24
III	Usefulness of KVK services		
1.	Creates general agricultural development awareness	107	59.44
2.	Impart information on routine old technologies	118	65.56
3.	Provide limited help to make timely decision	118	65.56
4.	Help to solve farming problems	122	67.78
5.	Promotes eco-friendly and sustainable technology transfer	71	39.44
6.	Develops vocational efficiency	49	27.22
7.	Develops new form of clientele groups	121	67.22
	Total	706	56.03
IV	Customer services agency		
1.	Friendly and courteous scientific and technical staff	146	81.11
2.	Farm visits are convenient for farmers	160	88.89
3.	KVK staff take care on farmers	122	67.78
4.	KVK scientific and technical staff are less motivated to serve	125	68.89
5.	Ensure regular training and continuous farm visits	98	55.00
6.	Services are flexible in nature	112	63.33
7.	KVK scientific and technical staff are less accountable to the farmers	138	75.56
	Total	901	71.51

Characteristics of the respondents:

Self-explanatory descriptive statistics of the respondents are presented in table 3. Majority of the farmer clientele were men with some women and few rural youths. Majority were mid-aged (63.75%) and were school dropout (86.25%). None of them had studied beyond high school. They have availed services of the KVK in different combinations with all of them having attended at least training and awareness programme. 73.75 per cent of them have medium information seeking behaviour with the most frequently utilized source being the KVK, state line departments and television.

As for extension functionaries half of them were KVK functionaries (SMSs and Farm Managers) and the other half were state line department functionaries. There was equal proportion of male and female respondents. Half of them were graduates in agriculture and allied disciplines, some had a master's degree and one was doctorate. All of them have attended subject matter related training programme organized by the KVK and some (40%) occasionally contact the KVK for subject matter advisory. 50 percent have medium and 30 per cent have high information seeking behaviour with the frequently utilized sources being colleagues, books and KVK.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the respondents

Variables	Category	Farmer clientele (n=80)		Extension functionaries (n=10)	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Type of Clientele	Farmers	56	70	NA	0
	Farm-women	19	23.75	NA	0
	Rural Youths	5	6.25	NA	0
	KVK functionaries	NA	0	5	10
	State line departments functionaries	NA	0	5	10
Age	Young (upto 35 years)	13	16.25	2	20
	Mid-aged (36-50 years)	51	63.75	8	80
	Old (above 50 years)	16	20	0	0
Gender	Male	58	72.5	5	50
	Female	22	27.5	5	50
Education	Illiterate	7	8.75	0	0
	School dropout	69	86.25	0	0
	High School	4	5	0	0
	Higher Secondary School	0	0	0	0
	Graduate	0	0	5	50
	Post Graduate	0	0	4	40
	Ph.D.	0	0	1	10
Services by KVK	Provision of farm inputs	64	80	0	0
	Advisory Service	68	85	4	40
	Awareness Programme & Trainings	80	100	10	100
	Trials and Field Demonstrations	55	68.75	0	0
Information seeking behaviour	Low	8	10	2	20
	Medium	59	73.75	5	50
	High	13	16.25	3	30

Association between clientele satisfaction and selected independent variables:

The association of clientele satisfaction with selected personal variables of the respondents was found out using appropriate statistical tools. Results are presented for two groups of respondents: farm clientele (farmers, farm-women and rural youths) and professional extension functionaries in Table 4. It is observed that for both the clientele groups the variable education was found to be negatively and significantly associated with the level of satisfaction. Educated clients are expected to be more aware and may have more expectations from the KVKs. Thus may lead to unfulfilled expectations and disappointments. Saravanan and Veerabhadraiah (2003) revealed that in case of public extension clientele education had a significant relationship with clientele satisfaction while Debnath (2012) found no relation. For the extension workers, age was found to have significant negative influence on the level of clientele satisfaction.

Aged and experienced professionals know the trade well and if they are exposed to training methods and contents which they already know or have no interest, they may be easily demotivated. On the contrary, young professionals are more enthusiastic to learn and expose themselves to various experiences. Sah and Kumar (2011) however reported that age had positive influence on satisfaction. Another variable found to affect the clientele satisfaction level in a positive and significant way is information seeking behaviour of the farm clientele. Farmers who maintain frequent contact with various information sources including the KVKs tend to gain more benefit from the information received. The variables gender and services by KVK do not show any significant relationship with clientele satisfaction. Agholor *et al.* (2013) found farmers' gender to be linked with Extension service satisfaction and outcomes. Ganpatet *et al.* (2014) revealed that farmers' age, gender and education level significantly influenced farmers' level of satisfaction.

Table 4. Association of clientele satisfaction with selected variables

Sl. No.	Independent Variables	Statistical tools used	Farmer clientele (n=80)	Extension functionaries (n=10)
1.	Age	Pearson Correlation	-0.11	-0.73*
2.	Gender	Pearson Chi-Square	0.28	4.28
103.	Education	Pearson Correlation	-0.24*	-0.74*
4.	Services by KVK	Pearson Chi-square	7.12	1.07
5.	Information seeking behaviour	Pearson Correlation	0.27*	-0.38

*Significant at 5 per cent level of significance

Conclusion

KVKs as frontline extension system have immense role and responsibility towards the farming community. The performance of the KVK is reflected in the perceived satisfaction level of the clientele it serves. With majority of the respondents scoring medium on the satisfaction level, the KVKs are performing moderately well but there is still an ample scope for improvement in the relevancy, usefulness and quality of the services provided. The technologies provided are perceived to be need based. However, customization of the services according to the preference and prevailing situation of the clients as well as reformation of delivery approaches is required. At the same time efforts to bring about economic empowerment to the farmers through market information, linkages as well as vocational and entrepreneurial trainings is envisaged to increase the satisfaction level of the clientele.

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