

Job performance and applicability of Krishi Vigyan Kendra mandates to subject matter specialists of different faculties

Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in India have been established by ICAR to cater to the needs of the farming communities. Krishi Vigyan Kendra is an innovative science based institution which undertakes vocational training of farmers, farmwomen and rural youth. The overall objective of KVK is technology assessment, refinement and demonstration for developing location specific technology modules in agriculture and allied enterprises (Anon., 2013). To ascertain the objectives of KVK the mandates are; conducting on-farm testing and frontline demonstrations, organizing trainings for farmers and extension personnel and to act as resource and knowledge center of agricultural technology for supporting initiatives of public, private and voluntary sector for improving the agricultural economy of the district.

The success of an organization largely depends on how effectively the extension personnel at field level perform their roles. Job performance is an important criteria for organizational outcomes and success. The mandates of KVK are implemented through the Subject Matter Specialists (SMSs) who are specialists in particular subjects, who conduct scientific evaluation, demonstration and training to extension personnel as well as rural youth. They provide direct interaction between farmers and scientist for effective technology dissemination and adoption. The present research aims to study the job performance and applicability of KVK mandates to the SMSs. The main objectives of this study is to measure the job performance of KVK SMSs and to study the applicability of KVK mandates to SMSs of different disciplines (Anon., 2016a and 2016b).

The study was conducted in 31 KVKs of Karnataka state during 2015-16. Krishi Vigyan Kendras are functioning under different host organizations namely; State Agricultural Universities (SAU-24), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR-2) and Non-government organizations (NGOs-5). The SMSs of all these KVKs were considered for the study. Descriptive and diagnostic research design was formulated to conduct the investigation. Total number of sanctioned post were 186 out of which 163 posts were filled. The pre-structured questionnaire was sent to all the SMSs through post. One hundred and twenty SMSs responded. Collected data was subjected to appropriate statistical analysis.

A teacher made job performance scale was developed to measure the performance of SMSs. The performance scale consisted of seven statements which were framed keeping in view the job chart of the SMS and mandates of KVK. The scale ranged on a five point continuum from excellent, good, satisfactory, poor to very poor with scores of 5,4,3,2,1 respectively. Further the respondents were grouped into three categories following the equal distribution method based on class intervals. To know the applicability of KVK mandates to the SMSs of different disciplines, questions were framed with

Yes/No response.

The data related to the profile of SMSs is shown in Table 1. It revealed that, majority (70.83 %) of the respondents were from the middle age group, maximum number (63.33 %) of them were post graduates and predominately males (71.66 %). The data also revealed that majority (74.16 %) of the respondents had less than 11 years experience on the job and 83.30 per cent of the SMSs were having less than 10 years of experience in the present post. Majority (75.00 %) of the SMSs were working under State Agricultural Universities (SAUs).

As per the data of table 2, it could be seen that 25 out of 31 KVKs had the post of the horticulturist, probably because horticulture is now an upcoming area. Karnataka is one among the important horticultural crop production states. About 68 per cent KVKs had a plant protectionist probably because major

Table 1. Profile of subject matter specialists of KVK n=120

		Frequency	Percentage
Age	Young (<37)	28	23.33
	Middle (38-50)	85	70.83
	Old (51-62)	7	5.84
Education	MSc	76	63.33
	Ph.D.	44	36.64
	Any other	-	-
Gender	Male	86	71.64
	Female	34	28.33
Experience	Total Experience		
	<11	89	74.16
	12 – 20	25	20.84
	>20	6	5.00
	Experience in present post		
	<10 years	110	91.66
	11 – 19 years	6	5.00
Classification of SMSs as per Host organization	>19 years	4	3.34
	SAUs	90	75.00
	NGOs	19	15.84
	ICAR Research Institutes	11	9.16

Table 2. Discipline wise subject matter specialists in KVKs* of Karnataka n=31

Discipline	Frequency	Percentage
Horticulture	25	80.64
Plant Protection (Entomology + Plant Pathology)	21	67.74
Crop Production (Agronomy)	18	58.06
Home Science	17	54.83
Soil Science	14	45.16
Agricultural Extension	11	35.48
Veterinary & Fisheries Science	8	25.80
Seed Science & Technology	2	6.45
Genetics & Plant Breeding	2	6.45
Agricultural Engineering	2	6.45

Note: * indices 31 KVK's of Karnataka

problem faced in agriculture is of pest and diseases management and hence most KVKs prefer to have a plant protectionist. Next were the agronomist, home scientists and soil scientists. It was optional to have other subject specialist based on the needs of an area. Although the post of Home Scientist is compulsory in every KVK, the post was vacant because of long leave of home scientist or non-filling up of the post.

Job performance assesses whether a person performs a job well. Performance is an important criterion for organizational outcomes and success. The results of table 3 revealed that almost all SMSs were having medium to high (98.34 %) level of job performance where as and only 1.66 per cent were having low level of job performance. The reasons for good job performance might be their commitment to the organization and the farming community. The SMSs are well aware of the mandatory activities of KVKs and the team as such i.e., Programme Coordinator and all SMS work to fulfill the mandates of KVK. Another reason might be that scientific advisory committee meetings are conducted twice in a year to evaluate the activities of KVK especially SMSs. Hence SMSs are alert and perform their jobs well so as to not cut a sorry figure during the scientific advisory committee meetings. Moreover monthly, bimonthly and yearly reporting also keep SMS on their toes.

This finding is in conformity with the findings of Basco, M., (2000), Panchksaari *et al.* (2001), Mohan *et al.* (2006), Anuradha and Sreedevi (2007), Pounraj (2013) and Debnath *et al.* (2014) who also found high level of job performance among different extension functionaries.

The present study sought the opinion of the SMSs about whether the mandates are suitable to their areas of specialization (Table 4). The questions were framed taking into consideration the difficulty of SMSs of Home Science in implementing FLDs and OFTs as per the format suggested by KVK. It was seen that majority of the SMSs (95.00%) fully agreed that mandates of KVK were most applicable to their job. The reason was that, motto of the KVK is to cater to the needs of farming community and so mandates have been designed accordingly. Five percent of SMSs said that mandates are not applicable. These may be

Table 3. Level of Job Performance of subject matter specialists of KVK

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Low (<16)	2	1.66
Medium (17-25)	25	20.84
High (>25)	93	77.51

the Home Scientists who felt that FLDs are more suitable for crops and crop production technologies and not very suitable for home science technologies. However Home Scientists have begun to take up some technologies like kitchen gardening, weaning foods, drudgery reducing technologies and such others. It is difficult for them to take up transfer of technologies (ToTs) in FLD and OFT formats in the areas of child development, clothing and textiles and nutrition, health & hygiene etc.

Difficulty in implementing these mandates was expressed by 53.33 per cent of SMSs. The reasons expressed that funds were not released on time, farmers were not co-operative and farmers expect subsidy and other inputs rather than technology. However 44.66 percent said they do not face any difficulty probably because the SMSs plan their programme based on the needs of farmers. The difficulty of implementation may be specific to some subject SMS especially Home Science where the need is actually not felt by the women farmers. Here the unfelt needs have to be converted to felt needs.

Most of the SMSs (83.33%) felt that all the villages of a district cannot be covered through KVKs mandates because KVKs have to work in a cluster of villages for 3 years where they disseminate all technologies and conduct trainings. After completing a particular area they shift to other villages. Some other reasons may be the large number of villages under the district and remote villages to be covered. With limited number of SMSs this task becomes difficult.

Almost all (99.15%) the SMSs said that the mandates were useful in meeting the needs of the farmers /farm women. Since TOTs are need based the OFTs are taken up as per local requirements and the FLDs are all location specific which disseminate advanced technologies to boost the production. Training programmes, both on and off farm conducted on regular basis have been able to improve knowledge, skill and attitude of farmers. All the KVK mandates as framed by ICAR are able to work in the direction of improving the socio-economic status and standard of living of the farm families.

Majority (92.66 %) of the SMSs felt that the mandates were really useful in meeting ideas behind establishment of KVKs, because KVKs are serving as knowledge center for the district and have become a hope for the farming community. The farmers are in regular contact with KVK and they are getting benefits of KVK technologies seeds, fertilizers and farm implements are provided as critical inputs at nominal rates.

Majority of them (62.50%) suggested that KVK mandates

Table 4. Applicability of KVK Mandates to subject matter specialists of different discipline

Mandates	n=120			
	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
Are the mandates of KVK applicable to your job?	114	95.00	6	5.00
Is there any difficulty in implementing these mandates?	64	53.33	56	46.67
Can all the villages of a district be covered through KVK mandates?	14	11.66	106	88.34
Are the mandates helping to improve farmer's/farm women needs?	119	99.16	1	0.84
Are these mandates really useful in meeting ideas behind establishment of KVKs?	110	91.66	10	8.34
Would you like these mandates to be modified?	45	37.50	75	62.50

need not be modified and should be maintained as it is because these mandates have been formed keeping in mind the welfare of the farmers. Indian Council of Agricultural Research has planned certain methods for TOTs with expert suggestions and OFTs and FLDs are well suited to transfer the technology in the area of crop production. The KVKs also conduct many skill enrichment and capacity building training programme for farmers, farm women and rural youth to start self-enterprise. The KVKs are also involved in production of inputs like planting materials, seeds and vermicompost etc. The marketing strategies should be worked out in the mandates. Only 37.50 percent of the SMSs felt that the KVK mandates need to be modified, specially OFTs and FLDs as they are not suitable for home science activities.

It is to be noted that the post of home scientist is compulsory in all KVKs. Probably this is due to the fact that a KVK home scientist has to cater to the needs of farm women. In a country like India where more than 80-84% of households have lands

less than 5 acres, women from such families work as both agriculturist as well as home managers. The mandate of KVK stress that home science SMS should cater to the productive role of the farm women. But the reproductive role is equally important. In fact it is more important than the productive role which can be shared by men. Farm technologies can be transferred to farmwomen by other SMS, while SMSs (Home Scientists) should lay more stress on the reproductive and homemaker role of the farm women.

It was concluded that SMSs play an important role in improving the lives of the farming community. They have rated themselves as good job performers indicating their commitment to their jobs. All the SMSs in a KVK work as a team to perform the mandated activities of KVK. The home scientist KVK however finds it difficult to take up all the home science technologies in the OFT, FLD mode because it may not be possible to massive changes in human development in numerical terms.

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