

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Livestock Farmers' Perception on Animal Husbandry Services Rendered Under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

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ABSTRACT

The Animal Husbandry sector receives only 12 percent of the total public expenditure on agriculture and allied areas resulting in underperformance of the sector. However, companies are offering different animal husbandry services under their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs abiding Section 135(1) of Companies Act 2013. The present study was carried out to assess the perception of livestock farmers on the availability and effectiveness of animal husbandry services rendered under CSR activities. A total of 120 livestock farmers, each with a minimum one adult dairy animal was selected from the villages adopted by the selected companies for delivering CSR activities. Data were collected using a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule through personal interviews with the respondents and analyzed appropriately to reveal the perception of livestock farmers about the availability and effectiveness of different CSR services. Most of the respondents perceived that extension, production, healthcare, and marketing services were occasionally available with average effectiveness due to the efficiency of services offered through CSR activities. Further, they perceived that the rarely available credit service had poor effectiveness. Healthcare service was the most preferred service in terms of availability and effectiveness, while credit service was the least preferred both in terms of availability and effectiveness.

Keywords: Animal husbandry service, CSR activities, Livestock farmers, Perception.

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INTRODUCTION

The livestock sector is an important sub-sector of agriculture and acts as a supplementary and complementary enterprise (DAHDF, 2018). This sector can be seen as a future agricultural growth engine. However, this sector receives only 12% of the total public expenditure on agriculture and allied sectors (GOI, 2012a). Low investment and inadequate funding have, badly, affected the success of this sector. As government funding for several livestock development schemes is still limited (GOI, 2012b), new opportunities to meet the requirements must be explored. Thus, the livestock sector in India is under-resourced. It necessitates to investigate the source for extending support to the livestock sector. CSR can be one such source to offer animal husbandry services. India is the first country in the world to make Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) mandate (Suresh, 2019) following an amendment in April 2014 of The Companies Act, 2013 (GOI, 2013). By tapping funds available under CSR in animal husbandry projects through concerted efforts can increase overall activities. Increased investment from the CSR funds can improve the performance of this sector (Chander *et al.*, 2015).

Department of Animal Husbandry (DAH) is monopolizing the provision of animal husbandry services in the state and result in inadequate service delivery. In the absence of alternative service providers, livestock farmers should only rely on DAH services, regardless of the degree of performance. Different organizations provide animal husbandry services to the farming community in India. Over

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the years, there have been increasing numbers of agencies, as a sign of pluralistic extension, providing various animal husbandry services, thereby increasing the opportunity to reach more farmers across the country. On the other hand, due to the mandate of Companies Act, 2013, companies started offering services including animal husbandry services like extension, healthcare, production, marketing, credit, etc. under their CSR Programs. But these companies vary in their scope, supported clients, staff and funding, etc. The quality of service and effectiveness of animal husbandry services

are essential for the effective management of CSR activities in the livestock sector. The perception of livestock farmers on animal husbandry services offered under CSR plays a significant role in the success of animal husbandry services. The changing scenario calls for a higher quality of services rather than mere availability (Rana *et al.*, 2013).

Considering this, the study was carried out to assess the perception of livestock farmers on the availability and effectiveness of animal husbandry services provided by companies under CSR.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Based on the core command area of CSR activities of three selected companies, the present study was conducted in three states of northern India. States were selected on the basis of the location of selected companies and their CSR activities in animal husbandry and allied sectors. Sambhal district of Uttar Pradesh, Solan district of Himachal Pradesh, and Udaipur district of Rajasthan were selected for the study. Two villages from each district were selected randomly from the list of villages adopted for offering animal husbandry services under CSR of the companies. Thus, a total of six villages *viz.*, Mehua and Noorpur from Sambhal, Khata and Mangu from Solan and Jawar and Teeri Villages from Udaipur districts were selected. From each village, 20 respondents were selected randomly. Thus, a total of 120 livestock farmers were selected for the study. Data were collected using a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule through a personal interview with the livestock farmers.

The interview schedule was developed using secondary data collected from the corporate social responsibility report of the selected companies and finalized in consultation with the experts. The final schedule comprised five broad areas, namely extension, production, healthcare, credit, and marketing services, for studying the perception of

Table 1: Perceived availability of different animal husbandry services based on timeliness (n = 120)

Services	Availability	Frequency	Percentage
Extension service	Rarely (<3)	36	30.00
	Occasionally (3-8)	73	60.83
	Regularly (>8)	11	9.17
Production service	Rarely (<2)	23	19.17
	Occasionally (2-8)	78	65.00
	Regularly (>8)	19	15.83
Healthcare service	Rarely (<4)	13	10.83
	Occasionally (4-10)	67	55.83
	Regularly (>10)	40	33.33
Credit service	Rarely (<2)	73	60.83
	Occasionally (2-5)	34	28.33
	Regularly (>5)	13	10.83
Marketing service	Rarely (<3)	51	42.50
	Occasionally (3-8)	55	45.83
	Regularly (>8)	14	11.67

respondents on availability and effectiveness of services. Responses were collected on a three-point continuum scale. Data were coded, classified, tabulated and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0). Frequencies, percentage, standard deviation (SD), mean, and weighted mean score (WMS) were calculated and results were interpreted. The total score for each activity calculated for every livestock farmer and they were categorized into three groups based on mean and SD. The continuum for availability comprised rarely, occasionally, and regularly and effectiveness comprised poor, average, and excellent categories. Ranking of services in terms of the level of availability and effectiveness computed based on the weighted mean score method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perception of livestock farmers towards animal husbandry services rendered under CSR activities

The importance of any social program or activity can be decided by feedback received from the members in the form of their perception of the delivered social activity. Keeping this in mind, the researcher studied the perception of the livestock farmers toward the availability and effectiveness of different animal husbandry services delivered under CSR activities.

Perceived availability of different animal husbandry services based on timeliness

Table 1 reveals that services on extension, production, healthcare and marketing were perceived as occasionally available services based on timeliness by 60.83, 65.00, 55.83, and 45.83% of the total livestock farmers, respectively. While credit service was perceived as rarely based on their availability by the majority (60.83%) of the livestock farmers followed by occasionally (28.33%) and regularly (10.83%). Only 9.17, 15.83, 33.33 and 11.67 per cents of the livestock farmers perceived services on extension, production, healthcare, and marketing, respectively, as regularly available. The result is supported by the findings of Rathod *et al.* (2012) and Jena and Chander (2018) and in contradiction with Verma (2012).

The availability of different services was ranked based on the timeliness by using the weighted mean score (WMS) method. Table 2 shows that first rank was given to healthcare services with WMS 2.23 followed by production (II rank),

Table 2: Perceived ranking of different animal husbandry services based on timeliness

Sl. No.	Services	Weighted score	Weighted Mean Score	Rank
1	Extension service	215	1.79	III
2	Production service	236	1.97	II
3	Healthcare service	267	2.23	I
4	Credit service	180	1.50	V
5	Marketing service	203	1.69	IV



Table 3 Perceived effectiveness of different animal husbandry services (n=120)

Services	Availability	Frequency	Percentage
Extension service	Poor (<4)	24	20.00
	Average (4-9)	70	58.33
	Excellent (>9)	26	21.67
Production service	Poor (<3)	30	25.00
	Average (3-9)	69	57.50
	Excellent (>9)	21	17.50
Healthcare service	Poor (<4)	18	15.00
	Average (4-9)	68	56.67
	Excellent (>9)	34	28.33
Credit service	Poor (<1)	65	54.17
	Average (1-4)	44	36.67
	Excellent (>4)	11	9.17
Marketing service	Poor (<4)	39	32.50
	Average (4-8)	62	51.66
	Excellent (>8)	19	15.83

extension (III rank), marketing (IV rank) and credit services (V rank) with WMS 1.97, 1.79, 1.69 and 1.50 respectively. The result shows that healthcare service was perceived as the most promptly offered service under CSR, while credit service offered the least promptly.

Perceived effectiveness of different animal husbandry services

Table 3 shows the effectiveness of different animal husbandry services perceived by livestock farmers. Responses were categorized into those who perceived the effectiveness of CSR activities as poor, average, and excellent using mean and SD methods. Table 3 shows that 58.33, 57.50, 56.67, and 51.66% of the respondents were perceived the effectiveness of extension services, production services, healthcare services, and marketing services as average, respectively. The study revealed that an overwhelming 85.00 percent of the respondents perceived above average effectiveness of healthcare service, and only 15.00% perceived poor effectiveness. The result differs from the findings of Ranjan *et al.* (2018). This could be due to the effective and efficient service delivery of the study organization through CSR activities.

Credit service was perceived as poor by the majority of livestock farmers (54.17%), followed by average (36.67%) and excellent (9.17%). Notably, 21.67, 17.50, 28.33, and 15.83 per cents of the livestock farmers felt that extension, production, healthcare, and marketing services, were excellent, respectively.

Table 4 envisages the ranking of the effectiveness of different livestock services by utilizing the Weighted Mean

Table 4 Perceived ranking of different animal husbandry services based on effectiveness

Sl. No.	Services	Weighted score	Weighted Mean Score	Rank
1	Extension service	242	2.02	II
2	Production service	235	1.96	III
3	Healthcare service	258	2.15	I
4	Credit service	186	1.55	V
5	Marketing service	220	1.83	IV

Score method. It also reflects that respondents ranked healthcare services first with WMS 2.15 followed by the extension (II rank), production (III rank), marketing (IV rank) and credit services (V rank) with WMS 2.02, 1.96, 1.83 and 1.55, respectively. The result shows that healthcare service was perceived as the most effective service delivered under CSR, while credit service, the least effective.

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