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Challenges and Constraints Faced by *Maitris* in Delivering Veterinary Services in Chhattisgarh, India

K. Chandraker¹, B.C. Das^{1*}, P. Swain¹, D.P. Swain¹,
A. Kumar Pandey² and B.K. Singh²

¹Department of Veterinary and A H Extension, College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, OUAT, Bhubaneswar-751003, Odisha, India

²Department of Veterinary and A H Extension Education, College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, BAU, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

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The present investigation was carried out in four districts of Chhattisgarh state to assess the challenges and constraints faced by *Maitris* in delivering the livestock veterinary services in the rural areas. Most of the *Maitris* stated that people do not pay properly for their services (74%), people expect to provide service as like veterinary officers of the department (91%), remuneration paid by government for their service is not satisfactory (95%), and not earning enough from the profession (60%). Most of the *Maitris* (88%) also reported that their income is affected as the department officials are providing minor veterinary services in their areas. From the study it was found that irregular payment by government was ranked first by the respondent followed by lack of refresher trainings as second most important constraint for *Maitris*. Irregular and untimely supply of liquid nitrogen and semen was ranked tenth by most of the *Maitris*.

Introduction

Chhattisgarh farming system is dominated by small and landless farmers who besides agriculture heavily depend on livestock for their livelihood.

The state is bestowed with large number of livestock across the species but their productivity level is very low. In the last two to three decades, it has been observed that the contribution of agriculture sector to gross domestic product (GDP) has been in declining trend whereas the contribution from livestock

sector has been increasing. Unfortunately, the role of livestock sector in supporting the livelihood of poor people and that it could be a tool for social and economic empowerment, by and large, has not been fully realised despite the fact that livestock sector supports the livelihood of 200 million of rural poor (Pradhan, 2014).

Incidentally, majority of livestock owners, as in India and Chhattisgarh, are small and marginal farmers or even the landless who owns about 80 per cent of the total livestock population in a mixed farming system and

continue to earn their livelihood from this occupation. The livestock wealth of Chhattisgarh is impressive in numbers across all species, constituting a natural resource base with immense livelihood implications, even though productivity levels are very low. This sector is a major contributor to rural employment next to agriculture. Provision of adequate livestock service is a prerequisite for increasing the production potentiality of livestock. Outline dispensaries and AI sub centres operated under the Livestock Development Department under Government of Chhattisgarh are the main source of veterinary services to all categories of livestock owners. The above institutions mostly provide curative health services, vaccination, artificial insemination and limited extension services.

In order to supplement the effort of the livestock development department to provide veterinary services to livestock owners of Chhattisgarh, Government of Chhattisgarh has introduced various private partners in the service delivery system. The private players like BAIF and JK Trust have been providing Artificial Insemination (AI) and Veterinary First Aid (VFA) services in the rural areas. Besides, Government of Chhattisgarh through National Project on Cattle and Buffalo Breeding (NPCBB) project has developed private AI workers named as Multipurpose Artificial Insemination Technician in Rural India (*MAITRIS*) in Chhattisgarh to provide AI services, vaccination, VFA at door step and also motivate farmers for genetic up-gradation of cattle and buffalo.

Since last 11 to 12 years, they have been providing services in the rural areas with active cooperation and guidance of the veterinary department. In spite of the best effort of the Chhattisgarh Government to retain them in service, many of them are not showing much interest to continue in the

profession and they are periodically opting out. The present investigation was carried out to know the challenges and constraints faced by the *Maitiris* in delivering the livestock services in the rural areas.

Materials and Methods

Four districts viz. Balodabazar, Dhamtari, Gariyaband and Mahasamund of Raipur Division of Chhattisgarh State was selected purposively for the study due to large population of livestock, good track record of A.I done and large number of *Maitiris* working in these districts. From each district, 25 *Maitiris* were selected randomly and in total 100 *Maitiris* were selected as respondents of the study. To measure the challenges faced by *Maitiris*, 10 statements on different aspects related to challenges in delivering livestock services in the field situations were developed and validated with the help of experts. Responses of the respondents were recorded against each statement with the help of 5-point continuum scale starting from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Similarly, to rank the constraints, 10 questions related to various aspects of livestock constraints were developed and they were validated by highly experienced experts of the different Departments of Veterinary College and Animal Husbandry Department of Government of Chhattisgarh. The respondents were to rank 10 statements according to the level of their difficulty, constraints faced mostly by them as first and least as tenth rank. After giving rank to each statement calculate percent position with the help of formula. Garret Ranking method was followed to rank the constraints. Statement which had highest average score was ranked as first or constraints faced mostly by *Maitiris* and statement which had low average score was ranked tenth or least constraints faced by them.

Results and Discussion

Challenges faced by *Maitris*

The findings of challenges faced by *Maitris* in field situations are summarized and presented in table 1. Most of the respondents agreed (74% strongly agreed and 26% agreed) that people are not paying them properly for their services. On the same way, most of respondents (9% strongly agreed and 91% agreed) stated that people are expecting treatment as like provided by A.V.F.O and veterinary officers from them. Most of the respondents (80%) did not see the V.A.S/AV.F.O as their competitors whereas only 9% of respondents agreed that they see them as their competitors.

Most of the respondents (95 % strongly agreed and 5 % agreed) that remuneration paid by the Government is not satisfactory. The *Maitrais* of the study area strongly believed that they are underpaid by both Government as well as farmers, which may be a major hindrance in maintaining their livelihood. Similar types of findings were reported by Swain, D and Das, B C (2017) in their study of *Gomitras* in Odisha. Most of the respondents believe (94% strongly agreed and 6% agreed) that they require more training to handle day to day work which will enhance their capabilities and technical soundness. As they are working in the grass root level, most of the respondents (7% strongly agreed and 77% agreed) think that people have more expectation as a clinician than an AI worker. Most of the respondents in selected districts (22% strongly agreed and 78% agreed) thought that financial insecurity compels to opt this profession as a secondary source of income which hampers their performance. This shows that respondents are working in the field of AI on part time basis. Again most of the respondents (60% strongly agreed and 25% agreed) feel that they are not earning enough from this

profession. This may have forced them to indulge in some other activities to earn some money for their livelihood and this may be the reason why they are considering veterinary service as a part time occupation not a fulltime job. However, 85% of the respondents disagreed that department is involving them in non-remunerative activities. The majority of the respondents (88 % agree and 12 % strongly agree) stated that as the V.A.S/AV.F.O are providing minor veterinary services in their areas which has contributed to their low earning from this occupation.

Constraints faced by *Maitris* in delivering Livestock Services

The analysis of constraints faced by the *Maitris* in delivering livestock services in the rural areas derived by Garret ranking method is presented in table 2 which reveals that irregular payment by government was ranked first by the respondent followed by lack of refresher training. Unable to do work due to lack of knowledge and skill was ranked third, poor incentives from department ranked fourth and poor quality semen was ranked fifth by the *Maitris*. Poor cooperation from villagers, low payment to my service by villagers and non-cooperation of V.A.S and A.V.F.O were ranked sixth, seventh and eighth, respectively. Communication problem was ranked ninth and untimely supply of liquid nitrogen and semen ranked tenth. These findings show that the performance of *Maitris* was affected mostly due to irregular payment by government, lack of refresher training, lack of knowledge and skill low compensation from the farmers and department. Similar types of findings have been reported by various authors in their studies of para-veterinarians providing livestock health services in the rural areas (Ahuja *et al.*, 2003; Rajashree and Subramanina, 2003; Kathiravan *et al.*, 2007; Bardhan, 2010; Swain and Das, 2016).

Table.1 Challenges faced by *Maitris* (n=100)

Sl. No.	Statements	Extent of opinion				
		SA	A	UD	D	SD
		No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
1	People are not paying properly for my services	74 (74)	26 (26)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
2	People are expecting treatment from me like LI and VAS/BVO	9 (90)	91 (91)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
3	V.A.S/A.V.FOS perceiving <i>Maitris</i> as their competitor.	0 (0.00)	9 (9)	80 (80)	11 (11)	0 (0.00)
4	Remuneration paid by the government is not satisfactory.	95 (95)	5 (5)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
5	More training is needed to handle day to day work.	94 (94)	6 (6)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
6	Since working in the grass root level, people have more expectation as a clinician than an AI worker.	7 (7)	77 (77)	10 (10)	6 (6)	0 (0.00)
7	Financial insecurity compels to take this profession as a secondary source of income which hampers performance	22 (22)	78 (78)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
8	Not earning enough from this occupation	60 (60)	25 (25)	0 (0.00)	15 (15)	0 (0.00)
9	Department is involving me in non-remunerative activities	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	85 (85)	15 (15)
10	Department officials are providing minor veterinary services in my area.	12 (12)	88 (88)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)

Table.2 Constraints faced by *Maitris* in delivering livestock services

Order	Statement	Total	Average score	Rank
A	Irregular payment by government	6425/100	64.25	I
B	Poor quality semen	5404/100	54.04	V
C	Untimely supply of Liquid Nitrogen and semen	2217/100	22.17	X
D	Low payment to my service by the villagers	5272/100	52.72	VII
E	Communication problem	4016/100	40.16	IX
F	Unable to do the work due to lack of knowledge and skill	5567/100	55.67	III
G	Lack of refresher training	5780/100	57.80	II
H	Poor incentives from department	5437/100	54.37	IV
I	Non-cooperation of V.A.S and A.V.F.O	4464/100	44.64	VIII
J	Poor cooperation from villagers	5298/100	52.98	VI

On the basis of these observations, it can be concluded that to develop a sustainable livestock services delivery network in the rural areas of Chhattisgarh through these *Maitiris*, their problems and challenges must be addressed by the State Department on priority basis. The Government of Chhattisgarh may adopt suitable strategies in favour of *Maitiris* so that they could have decent earning to stay in profession to serve the rural people.

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