



Training Strategies Preferred by the Horticulture Extension Personnel in Jammu Region of Jammu and Kashmir State

Arvinder Kumar, S K Kher, Banarsi lal, Rakesh Nanda, Akash Sharma and Rakesh Kumar

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Jammu (SKUAST-J)

ABSTRACT

Training strategy is a vision, direction, action, planning for training and development in an organization that requires implementation to achieve success. The study assessed the training strategies preferred by the horticulture extension personnel for attending trainings in Jammu region of Jammu and Kashmir. A total of 200 horticulture extension personnel (Horticulture development officers and horticultural technicians) were sampled for obtaining training by proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Data were analysed by using frequency and percentage. The finding of the study revealed that more than one half (63%) horticulture development officers and 53 per cent horticulture technicians preferred 3-5 days training programme. Majority (60%) Horticulture development officers (HDOs) preferred SKUAST- J Chatha and about one half (45%) horticulture technicians preferred their respective district head office/ KVKs as venue for attending training programme. Both horticulture development officers and horticulture technicians preferred to attend training programme in the month of October – December. Trainers for training from outside state were preferred by more than one half (53%) horticulture development officers where trainers out of their parent organisation but within the state were preferred by 3/4th of the horticulture technicians for obtaining trainings, respectively. Method as well as result demonstration techniques were perceived as very effective training methods. Major constraint expressed by horticulture development officers was shortage of staff, where pay anomalies, excess work load and lack of promotional avenues were major constraint expressed by the horticulture technicians in performing their job.

Key Words: Extension personnel, Horticulture, Preference, Strategy, Training.

INTRODUCTION

Training is an important process of capacity building of an individual to improve his or her performance. Training and development in any organization require a training strategy to achieve success and a method to make it happen or implementation. Training strategy is vision, focus, direction, action and planning for training and development in an organization that requires implementation to achieve success. It is a mechanism that establishes what competencies an organization requires in the future and a means to achieve it. Developing a strategy for training gives a competitive advantage to an organisation. Hence, it needs to be comprehensive and feasible for extension personnel so that every extension

personnel understand and make use of it to get an appropriate training. Without a training strategy or an action plan, we do not have mechanism that establishes for all our means to achieve goals. It is essential that training strategy is aligned to the organizations strategy and enables its vision to be realized. Keeping in view the significance of the training strategy, the present study was conducted to know about the preferred training strategies and problems encountered by the horticulture extension personnel to perform their job efficiently.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was carried out during the year of 2015-16 in Jammu division of Jammu and Kashmir. Sample of 200 horticulture extension

personnel (30 Horticulture Development Officers and 170 horticulture technicians) were selected by proportionate stratified random sampling method from total population 302 after pre-testing of interview schedule. Training strategy for obtaining training by extension personnel were asked to mention duration, venue, month, time and trainers they preferred the most among the given categories and preference rank was done accordingly. Perceptions towards training methods were measured on three point continuum scale i.e. not effective, somewhat effective and very effective. Problems encountered in their job performance were ranked on the basis of percent personnel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preferred Training Strategies of Horticulture Extension Personnel

A. Duration and venue for training

The data (Table 1) revealed that more than one half (63%) per cent horticulture development officers and 53 per cent horticulture technicians preferred to attend (3-5 days) training programme. Both horticulture development officers and horticulture technicians feel that a period of 3-5 days training

programme is sufficient for updating the required knowledge. Most of the horticulture extension personnel opined that they avoid long duration training programme because of their family and other personnel commitment. This observation was in accordance with Kumar *et al* (2013) who stated that more than three fourth of the respondents were in favour of short term residential programmes of (1-7 days) duration for which the respondent would probably have to stay away from his/ her home.

SKUAST-J Chatha possess well qualified and proficient experts of different disciplines as resource persons for trainings along with suitable physical environment and trainings material hence majority (60%) of the horticulture development officers preferred it as venue for attending training programmes. In a descriptive study probed to in service training needs of extension agents in west Iran, Alibaygi and Zafrafshani (2008) indicated that majority (81%) respondent would prefer to receive in-service training at an agricultural college. Similarly, in case of horticulture technicians about one half (45%) technicians preferred to attend trainings in their respective district head office/ KVKs followed by 37, 17 per cent who preferred to attend trainings at SKUAST-J Chatha and

Table 1. Preferred duration and venue for training. N=200

Sr. No.	Training Strategies	Horticulture Development Officers (n=30)		Horticulture technicians (n=170)	
		Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
A	Duration of training				
1.	1-2 days	0	V	15	III
2.	3-5 days	63	I	53	I
3.	6-10 days	3	IV	18	II
4.	1 month	27	II	9	IV
5.	6 month and above	7	III	5	V
B	Venue for training				
6.	SKUAST-Jammu	60	I	37	II
7.	Directorate of Horticulture	6	III	1	IV
8.	District head office	17	II	45	I
9.	Somewhere else	17	II	17	III

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other places (like horticulture nurseries, orchards/ farmers field). Horticulture technicians opined that attending of training programmes outside their home or place of posting may not be convenient in view of domestic obligations as well as release of travelling and dearness allowances by their parent organisation.

B. Preferred month, time and trainers for training

The data (Table 2) show that more than half (53%) Horticulture development officers and (57%) horticulture technicians preferred training in the month of October to December followed by 23, 13 per cent Horticulture development officers and 18, 14 per cent technicians who preferred in the month of April - June and January – march, respectively. Preference of training in the month of October to December were may be due to reason that during these months the horticulture extension personnel do not have much workload as compared to other months of the year in which the horticulture extension personnel remain busy in one or other activity like

planting, propagation, training and pruning etc. Saleh *et al* (2016) reported that training should not be conducted at the time of sowing and harvesting. Majority (87%) Horticulture development officers and (66%) horticulture technicians preferred to attend training in morning session (9 AM to 1 PM), respectively. Further, it was revealed that more than one half (53%) Horticulture development officers preferred trainers from outside the state and 3/4th technicians preferred trainers from out of their parent organisation but within the state. The respondent probably felt that interacting with experienced persons from outside the parent organisation and outside the state would be more beneficial.

C. Perception of horticulture extension personnel towards training methods

It was evident (Table 3) that 70 per cent of the horticulture development officers rated method demonstration as very effective method for training followed by result demonstration (63.3%), Discussion (60%).workshop (56.6%) respectively. The training method which were rated as Some what

Table 2. Preferred month, time and preference of trainers for training. N=200

Sr. No	Training Strategies	Horticulture Development Officers (n=30)		Horticulture technicians (n=170)	
		Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
A	Month				
1.	January – March	13	III	14	III
2.	April –June	23	II	18	II
3.	July – September	10	IV	11	IV
4.	October – December	53	I	57	I
B	Time				
5.	Morning(9AM-1 PM)	87	I	66	I
6.	Evening (2 PM-5 PM)	10	II	1	III
7.	Full Day (Official time)	3	III	33	II
C	Trainers				
8.	Expert from out of parent organization but within the state	30	II	75	I
9.	Expert from the parent organization (DOH)	17	III	23	II
10.	Expert from outside state	53	I	2	III

effective by HDOs were lecturer method (73.33%) followed by role play and buzz group technique (60%) each, and game cum exercise (53.3%). The method of training which were rated as Not very effective by the HDOs were game cum exercise (26.6%) followed by lecture (23.3%), buzz group technique (20%).

In case of horticulture technicians 85 per cent of the technicians rated method demonstration as very effective method for training followed by result demonstration and role play (77%) each, work shop (74%). The method which was rated somewhat effective by the horticulture technicians were lecture method (67%) followed by discussion (56%), game cum exercise (52%) and buzz group technique (51%). The method of training which were rated as Not very effective by the horticulture technicians were lecture method (22%) followed by game cum exercise (5%) buzz group technique (2%). Generally, all the methods were considered effective in training programme. However, few of them were considered very and somewhat effective as compared to others. Demonstration techniques were perceived as very effective training method

for training by both the horticulture extension personnel (HDOs and horticulture technicians). It is because demonstration technique is the technique of learning by doing and seeing is believing. This finding was in accordance with that of Khan *et al* (2011).

Problems encountered by the horticulture extension personnel in their job performance

The effective extension plays a very important role in development. However, there are many constraints to the extension and extension services which hinder the job performance of the horticulture extension personnel. Table 4 shows constraints encountered by the horticulture extension personnel in their job performance. In case of horticulture development officer shortage of staff was the main constraint ranked as first followed by lack of infrastructure, non-availability of timely funds, lack of departmental convenience/transport facility and low education level of supporting staff rank fifth. The findings were similar to those of Ahmed and Khalid (2013) who reported that extension workers were working under areas characterized by lack of facilities, absence of number of extension workers,

Table 3. Perception of horticulture extension personnel towards training methods. N=200

Sr. No.	Training methods	HDOs (%) n =30			Horticulture technicians (%) n=170		
		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective
1.	Lecture	3.3	73.3	23.3	11	67	22
2.	Discussion	60	33.3	6.6	43	56	1
3.	Method demonstration	70	26.6	3.3	85	14	1
4.	Result demonstration	63.3	30	6.6	77	22	1
5.	Workshop	56.6	30	13.3	74	25	1
6.	Buzz group technique	20	60	20	47	51	2
7.	Role play	20	60	20	77	22	1
8.	Games and exercise	20	53.3	26.6	43	52	5

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absence of farmers in field, limited use of mass media and non availability of agricultural inputs at affordable price to the farmers as problems in discharging their duties. The important constraints considered by the functionaries of the KVK were non availability of location specific and problem oriented technologies, paucity of budget and lack of transport facility was also reported by Pant and Singh (2014)

Similarly, in case of horticulture technicians pay anomalies was ranked as first constraint followed by excess work load, inadequate promotion policy, lack travelling and dearness allowances, lack of adequate horticultural tools , lack of first aid facilities in nurseries, excessive working hours in nurseries, working at one place for long period rank eighth. Lack of funding followed by no encouragement from management and lack of adequate working materials were also reported as problems of extension workers by Jamagani (2013)

preferred 3-5 d training programme. More than one half of the Horticulture development officers preferred to attend trainings at SKUAST-Jammu and about one half of the horticulture technicians who preferred to attend trainings at their respective district head office or at KVKs. Similarly, more than half of the horticulture extension personnel preferred that training should be conducted during the months of October – December in the morning session. Majority of the horticulture technicians preferred trainers from out of their parent organization but within the state where, majority of the Horticulture development officers preferred trainers only from outside the state. Both result as well as skill demonstrations were perceived as more effective teaching methods. Major constraint expressed by Horticulture development officers was lack of sufficient staff for performing the official job. Similarly, for technicians pay anomalies, excess work load and lack of promotional avenues were major constraint in performing their job.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the above findings that majority of the horticulture extension personnel

Table 4: Problems encountered by the horticulture extension personnel in their job performance N= 200

Sr. No.	Problems encountered by HDOs (n=30)	Percent personnel	Rank
1.	lack of infrastructure	83	II
2.	Shortage of staff/ Lack of manpower	87	I
3.	Low education level of technical staff	32	V
4.	Non- availability of timely funds	74	III
5.	Lack of departmental convenience & transport facility	72	IV
	Problems encountered by horticulture technicians (n=170)		
6.	Lack of adequate horticultural tools	27	V
7..	Excess working hours	19	VII
8.	Excess work load	82	II
9..	Pay anomalies	84	I
10.	Inadequate promotion policy	71	III
11.	Lack of travelling allowances/dearness allowances	46	IV
12.	Working at one place for long period	3	VIII
13.	Lack of Ist aid facilities in nurseries	22	VI

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