



A study on Methodologies Adopted in Decision Making Process by Krishi Vigyan Kendras(KVKs)

V Jyothi and S N Hanchinal

Department of Extension Education, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad – 580005.

ABSTRACT

Field investigation, discussion with staff at various levels using past experience were the dominant methods used in decision making process in university KVKs. In addition to the methods followed in university KVKs, NGO managed KVKs also consulted community, considered time and information availability while making decisions.

Key words : Decision Making, KVK, Methodologies.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), during the fifth five year plan, launched an innovative project for imparting training in agriculture and allied areas to the farmers, school drop-outs and field level extension functionaries in the country by establishing Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs).

KVKs work with specific mandates *viz.* to conduct On farm testing, frontline demonstrations and organize trainings to both farmers as well as extension personnel. To achieve the above mandates, careful attention is required right from formulation stage to implementation and evaluation stage of a developmental programme.

This support management emphasises on “decision making” today. Making sound, viable and rational decisions have become the demand of service providing organizations as they have a burden of both, keeping the spirit of their employees as well as satisfying the needs of their clients. This is because whether to reach or how to reach the desired end in an organization ultimately depends on the course of action chosen and the way used to arrive at.

The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences states that decision making is a social process that selects a problem for decision (*i.e.* choice) and produces a limited number of alternatives, from among which, a particular alternative is selected for implementation and execution (Snyder, 1962).

Singh (2000) identified decision making as a process of 1) identification of problems 2) defining the problem in terms of objective 3) generating alternative solutions to the problem 4) evaluation of the alternative solutions and 5) choosing the best

alternative solution to the problem. Keeping this background in mind the present study was designed to analyze personal and related socio-psychological characteristics of the staff members working in KVKs.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the year 2005-06 using ex-post facto research design in a total of six KVKs in northern Karnataka *viz.*, KVK, Hanumanamatti; KVK, Raichur; KVK, Sirsi and KVK, Bijapur working under UAS, Dharwad and KVK, Hulkoti and KVK, Tukkanatti working under Non-governmental organizations. Three categories of respondents *viz.*, programme co-ordinator, subject matter specialist and programme assistant were selected for the study. A total of 44 respondents (30 respondents from university KVKs and 14 respondents from NGO-KVKs) formed the sample.

Based on literature, the decision making process was studied in five stages as delineated by Singh (2000). Accordingly, each of the five activities were clearly defined to facilitate proper response with respect to each of them. Then the respondents were asked to indicate whether they participate in each stage of the decision making process or not for each category, by indicating yes or no. Based on their responses, frequency and percentage were calculated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Stage 1: Identification / recognition of problem

To identify a problem faced by target community for future planning of a project or programme the data in Table 1 revealed that in

university managed KVKs identification of problem was done by cent per cent of the respondents based on feedback reports from sub-ordinates. Other methods like field investigation, discussion among staff at different levels through the use of mass media (96.70% each) and by assigning a person or special unit, interaction with target community (83.33% each) played a role in identification of problem. In NGO managed KVKs cent per cent respondents indicated interaction with target community. Field investigation and mass media (92.86% each), discussion among staffs at different levels (85.71% each) and feedback report from sub-ordinates (78.57%) were used in problem identification.

This implied that university KVKs identified problems through feedback report from the subordinates about the previous implemented programmes that complement and supplement the understanding of the problem in a better way.

The probable reason why the NGO managed KVKs had given more importance to discussion of the problem with the target community is that the hidden factors that they were facing come out. Also used field investigation in identification of problems, the probable reason might be that a problem could be better understood in its original field settings when and where it appears, the staff as well discuss the problem based on their experience.

This finding is in agreement with Sashikumar (1998) who reported that non-governmental organisations involve the community in the identification of problem and upto the execution of their programmes.

Stage 2: Formulating / defining problem in terms of objectives

It is evident from the result (Table 2) that the task of defining the problem in terms of specific objectives in University KVKs was mainly carried out by cent per cent of the respondents by looking at the symptom or effect of problem, as well as analyzing the cause for the problem. Through discussion with the target community, using past experience, defining in terms of its relation with other related problems and discussing with the target community (96.67%), by consulting staff at different levels (93.33%) the problem was defined. While in NGO managed KVKs to define a problem cent per cent of the respondents discussed with target community, look at the symptoms, define in terms of its relation with other related problems. Also use past experience, analyze the cause of the problem and consult staff at different levels (92.86% each) and the problem was defined.

After identification of problem, its proper definition is a crucial step for further action. It is at this stage the decision will be made so that it moves in correct direction. A superficial observation of the problem alone is not sufficient so that a cause and effect analysis was followed as major method in defining problem. In NGO managed KVKs looking at the symptoms, defining the problem in terms of its relation with other related problems was done due to the reason that most of the problems are interconnected, one always reinforce the other. Also the discussion of the problem with the target community helps in defining the problem objectively and in real terms.

Stage 3: Generation of alternative solutions

The results in Table 3 revealed that in university managed KVKs cent per cent of the respondents indicated past experience, consult concerned staff members as well as target community before generating alternatives, while 93.33 per cent of them indicated that temporarily the job of generating alternative solutions were given to a particular person. Brainstorming was also used up to 90.00 per cent. Where as in NGO managed KVKs cent per cent staff use past experience, brainstorming, consult target community and staff members at different levels in generation of alternative solutions.

This implied that the KVKs were keen in making use of previous familiarity with similar problems and the way they were addressed earlier. This can be the potential source of alternative solutions as the experience can notify which way it helps and in which way it does not. The presence of staff with high experience might also be the reason for the use of consultation of staff members in finding alternatives. Experience counts more when it comes to suggesting workable solutions.

Further, consultation with the community might be due to the conviction that they live amidst the problem, the community might have some clues of how the situation could be improved. Even brainstorming accounted for generation of alternative solutions. The probable reason might be that it helps come out with novel ideas to solve the problems.

This finding is in agreement with Dutta (1977) who stated that a voluntary agency compared to Government agency has greater flexibility and freedom to experiment and try innovative ideas and accept failure, if any, while government has to find a scapegoat.

Table 1. Stage 1 - Methods used in identification / recognition of problem

S.No.	Methods	Extent of being used	
		University KVKs N ₁ =30	NGO KVKs N ₂ =14
1.	By assigning a person or special unit for the purpose	25 (83.33)	7 (50.00)
2.	Through field investigation	29 (96.66)	13 (92.86)
3.	Through feedback report	30 (100.00)	11 (78.57)
4.	By conducting meetings (discussion) among staff at different level	29 (96.66)	12 (85.71)
5.	From Mass media (Radio, T.V., News paper)	29 (96.66)	13 (92.86)
6.	Intuition (based on what comes to your mind)	22 (73.33)	9 (64.28)
7.	Donor/ Govt. specify the problem for your organisation	20 (66.66)	4 (28.57)
8.	By interacting with the target community	25 (83.33)	14 (100.00)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Table 2 : Stage 2 - Methods used in formulating / defining a problem

S.No.	Methods	Extent of being used	
		University KVKs N ₁ =30	NGO KVKs N ₂ =14
1.	By intuition (based on what comes to your mind)	18 (60.00)	5 (35.71)
2.	By looking at the symptoms / effect of the problem	30 (100.00)	14 (100.00)
3.	Using your past experience	29 (96.67)	13 (92.86)
4.	By analyzing the cause/ source of the problem	30 (100.00)	13 (92.86)
5.	In terms of its relation with the other related problems	29 (96.67)	14 (100.00)
6.	You consult staff at different level	28 (93.33)	13 (92.86)
7.	You discuss with the community affected by other problems	29 (96.67)	14 (100.00)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Table 3 : Stage 3 - Methods used in Generating of alternative solutions

S.No.	Methods	Extent of being used	
		University KVKs N ₁ =30	NGO KVKs N ₂ =14
1.	By using your past experience	30 (100.00)	14 (100.00)
2.	By using brainstorming	27 (90.00)	14 (100.00)
3.	By consulting community who benefit out of your activities	30 (100.00)	14 (100.00)
4.	There are specialized people in your organization for listing out alternative solutions	27 (90.00)	10 (71.43)
5.	By temporarily assigning people having other job in the organization to generate list of activities	28 (93.33)	6 (42.85)
6.	Through consulting concerned staff members	30 (100.00)	14 (100.00)
7.	Using separate creative units	20 (66.67)	7 (50.00)
8.	Solutions are pre-determined, no need of searching for other alternative solutions	19 (63.33)	6 (42.85)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Table 4 : Stage 4 - Methods used in evaluation of the alternatives

S.No.	Methods	Extent of being used	
		University KVKs N ₁ =30	NGO KVKs N ₂ =14
1.	Based on availability of resource required to implement the alternative	30 (100.00)	13 (92.87)
2.	Based on their consequence on the rest of the organization/other projects	30 (100.00)	8 (57.14)
3.	Based on intuition	20 (76.67)	8 (57.14)
4.	Based on technical difficulty of each alternative solution	29 (96.67)	13 (92.87)
5.	Based on opinion of your sub-ordinates	27 (90.00)	10 (71.43)
6.	Based on opinion of your superior	30 (100.00)	12 (85.71)
7.	By following the rules and procedures of your organization	29 (96.67)	14 (100.00)
8.	Based on opinion of the community	28 (93.33)	14 (100.00)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Table 5 : Stage 5 - Methods used in choice of alternatives

S.No.	Methods	Extent of being used	
		University KVKs N ₁ =30	NGO KVKs N ₂ =14
1.	Based on the interest of the organization (norms, values, objectives)	30 (100.00)	13 (92.86)
2.	Based on what the executive head/project co-ordinator feels best	26 (86.67)	10 (71.43)
3.	Based on amount of time and information available	28 (93.33)	14 (100.00)
4.	By testing the soundness of your preferred alternative in small scale	30 (100.00)	14 (100.00)
5.	By reaching to consensus among concerned group	30 (100.00)	13 (92.86)
6.	By considering limitation & constraints of the alternative	29 (96.67)	13 (92.86)
7.	Based on values of donor agency	22 (73.33)	8 (57.14)
8.	Based on contribution to diverse organizational goals or different projects	30 (100.00)	12 (85.71)
9.	Based on contribution to specific organizational goals or to a specific projects	30 (100.00)	14 (100.00)
10.	Applying certain decision rules or rule of thumb	26 (86.67)	11 (78.57)
11.	Based on simplicity	29 (96.67)	12 (85.71)
12.	Using your past experience	30 (100.00)	14 (100.00)
13.	Based on acceptance by those who implement the decision	27 (90.00)	14 (100.00)
14.	By consulting the target community	30 (100.00)	13 (92.86)
15.	You decide yourself based on information you have	25 (83.33)	10 (71.43)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Stage 4: Evaluation of the alternatives

It is evident from the results in Table 4 that in University managed KVKs evaluation of the alternative solutions was mainly carried out by cent per cent of the respondents based on availability of resources required to implement the alternative, consequences on the rest of the organisation / projects and based on opinion of superior. While other methods like consideration of rules and procedures of the organisation, taking technical difficulty of each alternative (96.67% each) and based on opinion of sub-ordinate as well as target community accounted 93.33 per cent. Where as in NGO managed KVKs evaluation of alternatives was done by cent per cent of the respondents following the rules, procedure, opinion of target community, based on availability of resources and technical difficulty (92.87% each) and based on opinion of superior (85.71%).

There could be many ways to solve a given problem, but all the ways may not be feasible from the organization's objective point of view. The availability of resources was not the prime criteria for evaluation of the alternatives as NGOs have other assets to provide the financial assistance immediately when compared to university KVKs. Also the opinion of superior is considered and sanction of the resources is required. While in NGO managed KVKs rules and procedures of organisation are strictly followed. This is more prominent in NGO managed KVKs when compared to university KVKs. NGOs also give prime importance to opinion of target community in evaluation of alternatives probably due to the reason that it should not harm the interest of target community and also that they can judge better that are suited to them.

Stage 5: Choosing the best alternative solution

The results in Table 5 depicted that in university KVKs to choose the best alternative solution prime importance was given by cent per cent of the respondents to interest of organisation, results of pilot studies, consensus among concerned group, based on contribution to organisational goals as well as specific projects goals. Also, considering simplicity, constraints (96.67%), based on availability of time and information (93.33%).

In NGO managed KVKs cent per cent of the respondents gave prime importance to choose the alternatives based on amount of time and information available, pilot studies, its contribution to specific project goals and organisation goals, using past experience and based on acceptance by those who implement the decision. These are followed by interest of the organisation, consensus among the concerned group, considering limitations of alternative and by consulting target community (92.86% each) the best alternative is chosen.

Interest of the organisation, consensus among concerned group and consulting target community are considered probably due to the reason interpreted earlier. Results of pilot studies considered probably due to the reason that if any new technology has to be introduced, its application on large scale may not be feasible, may result in harmful effects/losses.

It can be concluded that in University managed and NGO managed KVKs, decision making was done mainly based on field observation. This implied the level of sensitivity of KVKs before deciding the problem to be addressed as a priority based on field level reality. This can, therefore, be a source of assistance in any attempt to identify and meet the felt needs of the rural poor.

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