

Constraints Faced by Agri-Input Dealers and their Suggestions

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ABSTRACT

The research study was conducted to study the constraints faced by the agri-input dealers and their suggestions to overcome the constraints in Southern Telangana zone of Telangana state. The data were collected by personal interview method through a structured interview schedule. The major constraints faced by the agri-input dealers were, late repayment by the farmers followed by Lack of knowledge in maintaining stock book and sales register of the products, High transportation charges and low margin for different agri-inputs etc. were mentioned as critical constraints by large majority of agri-input dealers. Suggestions given by the Agri-input Dealers were, Sharing of transportation charges by different stake holders followed by Increase the margin for different agri-inputs, Provision of capital as loan for establishment and Control of advance booking of agri-inputs etc.

Keywords: *Agri-input dealers, Suggestions, Constraints.*

Agriculture is the culture of India since ancient times. It has its own roots of development since its inception to the present globalized agriculture. The scenario of agriculture over the years depicted that, it is an evergreen occupation for millions of people and feeding the nation with persistent vigour. Even now, more than 70 per cent of the people engaged directly or indirectly in agriculture. The sphere of influence of agriculture is unlimited and touches almost all the systems of life with due reputation. Starting from the primary stake holders of agriculture i.e., farmers to the ultimate inventors of the technologies i.e., the scientists, different sorts of people were involved in creation of food for the billions of people with diverse roles and responsibilities.

The two important factors for the development of agriculture are research and extension. Development of new technologies, and their associated inputs, post-harvest processing to the final marketing and prices of all the farm produce are critical in improving farm productivity. On the other side, transfer of all such information to the farming community is of paramount important challenge for the stakeholders. Mostly the farmers are not aware of correct types and dosage required for particular agro chemicals for different crops and new technologies. In the changing scenario of agricultural extension it is still becoming more and more complex and projecting the diversified ways and means for transfer of agricultural technology.

An efficient extension system capable of timely dissemination of need based farm technology among farming communities is vital for achieving sustained growth in agriculture. The system of transfer

of technology from research to the farmers through appropriate stake holders played a crucial role in modernizing agriculture.

Agri-input dealers playing tremendous role in reaching the farmers by performing dual role of providing agri-inputs as well as technological back up to the farmers informally. They are the chief source of farm information to the farming community with utmost credibility. Besides the supply of inputs and credit, their role in transfer of agricultural technology is notable and acclaimed by the farmers for their accessibility and adorability. Though the dealers are not having formal agricultural education, their words are very much appealing to the farmers resulting in development of strong linkage to meet their agri-input demands.

The Indian farmer continues to depend more on the input dealers than ever before for the information. In spite of that the agri-input dealers in the country have faced lot of constraints while dealing with their business activity. Anitha (2005) revealed that major problems faced by input dealers were difficulty to make credit availability, fluctuation in the market prices, non-supply of inputs in time. Chianu (2008) revealed that major business constraints including high transport cost, lack of market information and limited business skill and knowledge. Large number of pesticide retailers stated that lack of need based training programmes, followed by high cost in transportation, lack of technical knowledge in maintaining stock book and sales register of the product, delay in renewal of license and lack of technical knowledge about different brands of product.

Table 1. Constraints faced by the agri-input dealers**(n = 120)**

S. No.	Constraints as perceived by agri-input dealers	Score	Rank
1	Late repayment by the farmers	191	I
2	Lack of knowledge in maintaining stock book and sales register of the products	189	II
3	High transportation charges	169	III
4	Low margin for different agri-inputs	156	IV
5	Crop failure due to natural calamities	139	V
6	Lack of Management skills in Trade	129	VI
7	Lack of capital for establishment and maintenance	125	VII
8	Lack of technical knowledge about different brands of product, active ingredients and dose etc...	120	VII
9	Crop failure problem due to spurious inputs	115	IX
10	Delay in delivery of inputs by the input dealers	112	X
11	Non-availability of farm inputs in time	111	XI
12	Lack of accessibility to bank loans	107	XII
13	Price fluctuations in different crop seasons	99	XIII
14	High wage rates for the labour	82	XIV
15	Pressures from Government officers	76	XV
16	Delay in renewal of license	60	XVI

Table 2. Suggestions given by the agri-input dealers

S. No.	Suggestions given by agri-input dealers	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Sharing of transportation charges by different stake holders	106	88.33	I
2	Increase the margin for different agri-inputs	102	85	II
3	Provision of capital as loan for establishment	94	78.33	III
4	Control advance booking of agri-inputs	90	75	IV
5	Awareness on different new brands and their application	86	71.66	V
6	Improvement of Management skills in Trade	79	65.83	VI
7	Maintaining quality standards by the agri-input agencies	74	61.66	VII
8	Conduct of interaction programs with stake holders in agri-input business	69	57.55	VIII
9	Conduct need based training program's	61	50.83	IX
10	Recommendation of agri-inputs by the AO and AEO's	56	46.66	X

The approaches in agricultural extension system and transfer of farm technology have undergone spectacular changes over the years. These changes have taken place structurally and functionally across the globe. Many countries are now in the process of supplementing the public extension system, by encouraging input dealers.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Ex post facto research design was followed in the present investigation. The Telangana state was chosen as the locale of the study. Southern Telangana zone from Telangana state was selected for the study. Two districts from Southern Telangana zone viz., Jogulamba Gadwal and Suryapet, were selected based on highest number of agri-input dealers. Three mandals

from Jogulamba Gadwal district viz., Gadwal, Alampur, Ieeja and three mandals from Suryapet district viz., Suryapet, Kodad, Huzurnagar were selected based on the highest number of agri-input dealers thus makes total of six mandals. From each of the selected mandal, twenty respondents were selected randomly from the list of the agri-input dealers obtained from the officials of the State Department of Agriculture, making a total of 120 respondents. The data were collected by personal interview method through a structured interview schedule and analyzed by employing suitable statistical methods. A set of 16 important constraints were identified in consultation with scientists of ANGRAU and Extension officers of State Department of Agriculture of Andhra Pradesh. They were measured on 3 point continuum *i.e.* 'major problem',

'minor problem' and 'not a problem' by giving scores 2, 1 and 0 respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Constraints faced by the Agri-input dealers

The major constraints faced by the agri-input dealers were listed based on the scores obtained, accordingly ranks were given to the constraints. Thus the table 1. Explicitly depicted that, "Late repayment by the farmers" (191) was found to be the major constraint and ranked first. Followed by "Lack of knowledge in maintaining stock book and sales register of the products" (189) and "High transportation charges" (169), "Low margin for different agri-inputs" (156) were mentioned as critical constraints by large majority of respondents securing second, third and fourth rank respectively. The agri-input dealers might perceived the financial crunches regularly due to extended time lag of repayments by the farmers as well as unforeseen overheads and poor maintenance of records.

The other constraints like "Crop failure due to natural calamities" (139), "Lack of Management skills in Trade" (129), "Lack of capital for establishment and maintenance" (125), "Lack of technical knowledge about different brands of product, active ingredients and dose etc." (120), "Crop failure problem due to spurious inputs" (115), "Delay in delivery of inputs by the input dealers" (112), "Non-availability of farm inputs in time" (111), "Lack of accessibility to bank loans" (107) "Price fluctuations in different crop seasons" (99), "High wage rates for the labour" (82), "Pressures from Government officers" (76) and "Delay in renewal of license" (60) were also expressed by the agri-input dealers. The findings of the present study were inline with the findings of Anitha (2005), Chianu (2008), Ram (2014) and Singh (2015).

Suggestions given by the Agri-input Dealers

The majority of the agri-input dealers felt that the 'Sharing of transportation charges by different stake holders' as one of the major suggestions and it was ranked first among all the suggestions.

'Increase the margin for different agri-inputs' was suggested by second majority of respondents and was ranked second followed by 'Provision of capital

as loan for establishment' ranked third, 'Control of advance booking of agri-inputs' ranked fourth. 'Awareness on different new brands and their application' ranked fifth, followed by 'Improvement of Management skills in Trade' ranked sixth, 'Maintaining quality standards by the input agencies' ranked seventh, 'Conducting interaction programs with stake holders in agri-input business' ranked eighth, 'Conducting need based training programs' ranked ninth and 'Recommendation of agri-inputs by the AO and AEO's' was ranked tenth.

CONCLUSION

The constraints and corresponding suggestions given by the agri-input dealers can wrapped up by designing a suitable mechanism for effective financial transaction between farmers and agri-input dealers, capacity building, well established agreement between agri-input dealers and input manufacturers, effective monitoring of quality standards by the State Department Officials, and proper linkages has to be formulated with well defined roles and responsibilities among all the stakeholders. Focus should be made in restructuring the role of agri-input dealers towards effective transfer of technology.

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