



Problems Faced by the Input Dealers in Their Communication Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

The study revealed that majority (75.00%) of the input dealers stated that 'Lack of sufficient knowledge about farm inputs' was the major problem followed by other problems like 'Lack of computer knowledge to diagnose the crop diseases' (66.67%), 'less exposure to mass media.' (63.33%), 'Less encouragement from agricultural officers' (58.33). Majority of the input dealers (73.33%) suggested that 'Training programmes should be conducted regarding new farm inputs and diagnosis of the diseases' followed by 'More number of training programmes should be conducted to impart computer knowledge' (70.00%), 'Agricultural officers and scientists should maintain continuous contact with the input dealers' (68.33%), 'Conducting frequent meetings and group discussions among input dealers and also with farmers' (46.67%), 'Input dealers should be given sufficient information material about new farm information for updating their knowledge' (45.00%). The suggested strategy includes providing training programmes about farm input and computer knowledge, low cost audio and video cassettes, CDs and DVDs, using interaction multi-media modules, information kiosks and ICT tools like mobiles and touch screen information centres for effective communication behaviour of input dealers

Key words : Communication behaviour, Input dealers, Problems, Strategy, Suggestions.

Farmers are often not aware of correct types and dosage required for particular agro-chemicals for different crops. Agro inputs are playing a major role in farm productivity. Among all the agencies input dealers are larger in number and spread even in interior areas of the country. For the past several decades, farmers have relied upon farm input dealers for quality inputs and agricultural information. Singh (1989) reported that farm input dealers take keen interest and participate in technology transfer being the indirect beneficiaries.

Input dealers are facing many problems in acquisition, processing and the dissemination of farm information to the farmers. Hence the present study was undertaken with an objective to elucidate and their suggestions in communication behaviour of input dealers and also to suggest the suitable strategy for effective dissemination of information.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Guntur district purposively because it occupies the first position in the total number of input dealers among all the districts in Andhra Pradesh. Out of 57 mandals in

Guntur district, two mandals namely Guntur (urban) and Macherla were selected purposively for the study, where the input dealers number is high. A total number of 60 input dealers were selected proportionately from the two mandals by applying proportionate random sampling method. An Ex-post facto research design was followed and data was collected from the respondents through a well structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The statistical tools used were; Arithmetic Mean, Frequency and Percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A perusal of the Table 1. Indicated that the majority (75.00%) of the input dealers stated that 'Lack of sufficient knowledge about farm inputs' was the major problem followed by other problems like 'Lack of computer knowledge to diagnose the crop diseases' (66.67%), 'less exposure to mass media.' (63.33%), 'Less encouragement from agricultural officers' (58.33%), 'Lack of sufficient field experience' (36.67%), 'Less risk bearing ability.' (33.33%), 'Less participation in social functions' (26.67%), 'Lack of business experience for storage and transformation of information' (25.00%), 'Insufficient feedback from

farmers about performance of new input' (21.67%), 'Low education level of input dealers' (20.00%), 'Lack of sufficient training and skills about farm inputs' (18.33%) and 'Inability of input dealers to convince the farmers about new farm inputs' (16.67%).

From the above results it could be inferred that majority of the input dealers expressed the problems like that 'Lack of sufficient knowledge about farm inputs', 'Lack of computer knowledge to diagnose the crop diseases', 'less exposure to mass media' and 'Less encouragement from agricultural officers' the reasons might be due to the fact that input dealers had no accurate knowledge about new farm inputs and their recommendations, lack of computer knowledge for its application to diagnose the crop diseases and agricultural officers were not in regular contact with the input dealers.

The problem of 'Lack of sufficient field experience', 'Less risk bearing ability', 'Less participation in social functions', 'Lack of business experience for storage and transformation of information' might be due to the fact that they had less field experience and social participation and also input dealers were reading any agricultural journals due to lack of interest.

Further very little number of input dealers expressed the problems like 'Insufficient feedback from farmers about performance of new input' (21.67%) 'Low education level of input dealers', 'Lack of sufficient training and skills about farm inputs' and 'Inability of input dealers to convince the farmers about new farm inputs' the reasons might be due to the fact that input dealers had low level of education and less number of trainings received.

From the Table 2. it can be inferred that majority of the input dealers (73.33%) suggested that 'Training programmes should be conducted regarding new farm inputs and diagnosis of the diseases' to overcome the problems in their communication behaviour followed by 'More number of training programmes should be conducted to impart computer knowledge' (70.00%), 'Agricultural officers and scientists should maintain continuous contact with the input dealers' (68.33%), 'Conducting frequent meetings and group discussions among input dealers and also with farmers' (46.67%), 'Input dealers should be given sufficient information material about new farm information for updating their knowledge' (45.00%), 'Training programmes about risk bearing ability and new marketing strategies' (41.67%), 'Agricultural officials should conduct more field visits for input dealers' (36.67%), 'Government should take measures to strengthen the relationship of the input

dealers with input companies and also with farmers' (30.00%), 'Trainings should be given to all input dealers without any political intervention' (23.33%), 'Demonstration units need to be maintained properly to get the confidence of farmers about new farm information' (20.00%), 'Provision of sufficient stipend to the input dealers during training programmes' (16.67%) and 'A minimum of college education should be made compulsory for giving the licenses for the farm input outlets' (11.67%).

An array of suggestions offered by the input dealers to overcome the problems faced in their communication behaviour. The suggestions which stood in the forefront are 'Training programmes should be conducted regarding new farm inputs and diagnosis of the diseases' and 'More number of training programmes should be conducted to impart computer knowledge'. Perhaps these suggestions might be offered as their level of knowledge about new farm inputs and computer was very meager.

The other suggestions given by input dealers like 'Agricultural officers and scientists should maintain continuous contact with the farmers', 'Conducting frequent meetings and group discussions among input dealers and also with farmers'. The reasons might be that agricultural officers were not in regular contact with the input dealers and group discussions will help the input dealers to share agricultural information among themselves and also with the farmers.

The reason for the suggestion of 'Input dealers should be given sufficient information material about new farm information for updating their knowledge' might be due to the fact that all the input dealers used distribution of information material as one of the important information dissemination channels.

The reasons for the suggestions like 'Training programmes about risk bearing ability and new marketing strategies', 'Agricultural officials should conduct more field visits for input dealers' and 'Demonstration units need to be maintained properly to get the confidence of farmers about new farm information' might be due to the fact that majority of the input dealers were landless and had low farming experience.

The remaining minor suggestions given by the input dealers were 'Provision of sufficient stipend to the input dealers during training programmes' and 'A minimum of college education should be made compulsory for giving the licenses for the farm input outlets'. The reasons for these suggestions might be due to the fact that the input dealers sufficient education only can understand the agricultural and

Table 1. Problems faced by the input dealers in their communication behaviour.

Sl. No. Problems	Respondents		Rank
	Frequency	Percentage	
1. Low education level of input dealers.	12	20.00	X
2. Lack of business experience for storage and transformation of information.	15	25.00	VIII
3. Lack of sufficient training and skills about farm inputs.	11	18.33	XI
4. Less risk bearing ability.	20	33.33	VI
5. Less exposure to mass media.	38	63.33	III
6. Lack of sufficient knowledge about farm inputs.	45	75.00	I
7. Less participation in social functions.	16	26.67	VII
8. Lack of computer knowledge to diagnose the crop diseases.	40	66.67	II
9. Insufficient feedback from farmers about performance of new input.	13	21.67	IX
10. Inability of input dealers to convince the farmers about new farm inputs.	10	16.67	XII
11. Lack of sufficient field experience.	22	36.67	V
12. Less encouragement from agricultural officers.	35	58.33	IV

scientific information efficiently and can use proper channels for information dissemination to the farmers.

Strategy for effective communication of input dealers

Keeping in view the above said problems and suggestions the strategy was developed for effective communication of agricultural information by input dealers to the farmers were listed as follows.

- Efforts must be made to provide required knowledge and skill through conducting more training programmes by the extension functionaries for the input dealers on new farm inputs, diagnosis of crop pests and diseases and correct recommendations of pesticides and insecticides.
- Agricultural officers and scientists should be always in contact with input dealers for conducting frequent meetings and group discussions among input dealers and also with the farmers.
- During the course of survey the respondents have strongly argued for arranging training on computer usage for diagnosis of the diseases. For this purpose it will be worth while on the part of the government to organize such trainings.
- Since majority of the input dealers depending on information material as an important source of farm information, efforts should be made by the AO's and scientists to provide all important and timely information about new farm inputs and technologies.
- Efforts should be made by agricultural department to conduct more number of field visits so that input dealers can aware of actual field conditions and prevailing crop diseases.
- Agricultural officials should conduct vocational training programmes on input dealers about new marketing strategies and risk bearing ability.
- Agricultural department should give assistance to the input dealers for maintaining demonstration units for getting the confidence of farmers about new farm inputs.
- Government should take measures to strengthen the relationship of the input dealers with input companies and also with the farmers.
- Efforts should be made by the government about making a minimum level of education compulsory for input dealers to give licenses for the farm input outlets.
- Government needs to create awareness to input dealers about different cultivational and technical aspects of agriculture through different interaction multi-media modules.

Table 2. Suggestions to overcome the problems in communication behaviour of input dealers

Sl. No.	Suggestions	Respondents		Rank
		Frequency	Percentage	
1.	Training programmes should be conducted regarding new farm inputs and diagnosis of the diseases.	44	73.33	I
2.	Trainings should be given to all input dealers without any political intervention.	14	23.33	IX
3.	Demonstration units need to be maintained properly to get the confidence of farmers about new farm information.	12	20.00	X
4.	Agricultural officials should conduct more field visits for input dealers.	22	36.67	VII
5.	Agricultural officers and scientists should maintain continuous contact with the input dealers.	41	68.33	III
6.	More number of training programmes should be conducted to impart computer knowledge.	42	70.00	II
7.	Provision of sufficient stipend to the input dealers during training programmes.	10	16.67	XI
8.	Training programmes about risk bearing ability and new marketing strategies.	25	41.67	VI
9.	Input dealers should be given sufficient information material about new farm information for updating their knowledge.	27	45.00	V
10.	A minimum of college education should be made compulsory for giving the licenses for the farm input outlets.	7	11.67	XII
11.	Government should take measures to strengthen the relationship of the input dealers with input companies and also with farmers.	18	30.00	VIII
12.	Conducting frequent meetings and group discussions among input dealers and also with farmers.	28	46.67	IV

11. Government should provide the information about new farm inputs and farm technologies in the form of low cost audio and video cassettes, CDs and DVDs to the input dealers so that input dealers can use them for easy dissemination of agricultural information to the farmers.

12. Information kiosk should be setup so that input dealers can get up to date agricultural information.

13. Efforts should be made by the government in using ICT tools like mobiles and touch screen information centres for input dealers to get agricultural information and should give training for their effective utilization in

order to enhance the communication behaviour of input dealers.

It can be concluded that majority of the input dealers stated that 'Lack of sufficient knowledge about farm inputs' was the major problem followed by other problems like 'Lack of computer knowledge to diagnose the crop diseases', 'less exposure to mass media.', 'Less encouragement from agricultural officers'. Majority of the input dealers suggested that 'Training programmes should be conducted regarding new farm inputs and diagnosis of the diseases' followed by 'More number of training programmes should be conducted to impart computer knowledge', 'Agricultural officers and

scientists should maintain continuous contact with the input dealers', 'Conducting frequent meetings and group discussions among input dealers and also with farmers', 'Input dealers should be given sufficient information material about new farm information for updating their knowledge'. The suggested strategy includes providing training programmes about farm input and computer knowledge, low cost audio and video cassettes, CDs and DVDs, using interaction

multi-media modules, information kiosks and ICT tools like mobiles and touch screen information centres for effective communication behaviour of input dealers.

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(Received on 28.09.2011 and revised on 22.11.2011)