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Role performance of farm input dealers in agro-advisory in South Konkan

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Abstract

This paper examined the actual Role performance of the Farm input dealers in agro-advisory. The study was conducted at Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg district in South Konkan region of Maharashtra. The sample was constituted 120 farm input dealers drawn from three tahsils each from Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts. The respondents were interviewed with the help of a specially designed schedule. The ex-post facto research design was used for the present study. In study locations the farm input dealers have perceived medium role in providing agro-advisory and transfer of technology. It was revealed that slightly more than three-fifth (61.66 per cent) of the farm input dealers had 'medium' role performance. The most performed roles were 'providing credit based agro- advisory services to the farmers' followed by the roles 'delivering and checking relevant and timely agro-advisory services to the farmers in the study area', 'conducting demonstrations/ campaign/ shows/ seminars on productive technologies related to different crops to farmers', 'visiting the farmers field on fixed day' and 'ensuring quality, low cost agro- advisory services to the farmers'. Findings of the study led to conclude that more than three-fifth of the farm input dealers have perceived medium role in transfer of technology. As farm input dealers are linked with supply and service of agricultural inputs, there is more reliance on farm input dealers by the farmers.

Keywords: Role performance, farm input dealers, South konkan

Introduction

Agriculture is the backbone of India's economy in terms of income, employment generation and ensuring food and nutrition security. Agricultural research and extension are two important factors of agricultural development. An efficient extension system capable of timely dissemination of need based farm technology among farming communities is paramount importance for achieving sustainable growth of agriculture. The system of transfer of technology from research stations to the farming community has played a crucial role in modernizing agriculture. Farmers now required adopting a wider range of inputs and practices and developing skills for their more efficient use. Agro inputs are playing a major role in farm productivity.

Dealer serves as an important link between the manufacturers and the farmers. So he has the responsibility to disseminate latest farm technology up to the field level especially in the era of the free economy and world trade organization. There is a large network of about 2.82 lakh Agri-input dealers in the country, who are the important source of farm information to the farming community. Nearly 90 per cent of the Agri-input dealers operating in our country do not have any formal education. Most of input dealers have direct touch with the farmers and awareness about pests, diseases, fertilizers, seeds, technology and recent developments. For development of farmers the government may consider effective channel and keep information at dealers for farmer education, hang notice board and also train the dealers about recent changes and development in agriculture. (Leelavani, 2011) [3]. Keeping this in view the present study entitled "Role performance of Farm input dealers in Agro-advisory "was undertaken".

Objectives of the study

To study the role performance of the farm input dealers in terms of agro advisory services.

Methodology

The present study was conducted in South konkan region of Maharashtra state which includes Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts. From each district, three tahsils was selected for present study. Thus, six tahsils from two districts was identified for investigation.

For this purpose, a list of input dealers was obtained from the respective Joint and Assistant Director of Agriculture Offices. From the list prepared, those who are operating in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts. A total number of 120 input dealers were selected by applying proportionate random sampling method. The data was collected with the help of a specially designed interview schedule by keeping in view the objective of the study. This was measured by the procedure followed by Ganiger (2012) ^[1] with suitable modification. The schedule consists of twenty four statements related to the job performance of farm input dealers. The responses for each statements were rated on a five point continuum namely, most often, often, some time, seldom and never with the scores of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively. The collected data was classified, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted by using various statistical method in order to draw meaningful

conclusions. 'Ex-post facto' research design was used to conduct study.

Result and Discussion

i) Overall Role performance of the farm input dealers in terms of agro advisory services.

In this study the role performance is measured by the actual behaviour of the farm input dealer which is relevant to the pursuance of his job. A clearly defined job chart of farm input dealers in relation to agro-advisory services was formed by taking into consideration of earlier studies on the input dealers and in consultation with the input dealers, company agents, Department of Agriculture officials and extension experts. The data regarding the role performance of farm input dealers in providing agro-advisory services to the farm input dealers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The data regarding the role performance of farm input dealers in providing agro-advisory services to the farm input dealers are presented

Sl. No.	Role performance (Score)	Farm input dealers (N = 120)	
		Number	Percentage
1.	Low (Up to 85)	23	19.17
2.	Medium (86 to 114)	74	61.66
3.	High (115 and Above)	23	19.17
Total		120	100.00

It can be concluded that 61.66 per cent of the farm input dealers had 'medium' role performance, followed by 'high' and 'low' role performance (19.17 per cent each) in providing agro-advisory services to the farmers. The average role performance score of the farm input dealers was 100.33.

ii) Item-wise analysis of role performance of the input dealers in terms of agro-advisory services

Different roles performed by the input dealers were studied in detail. Item wise analysis of specific role performed by the input dealers in agro-advisory services is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Item wise analysis of specific role performed by the input dealers in agro-advisory services is presented

Sl. No.	Statement	Response categories					Total score	Rank
		MO	O	S	L	NV		
1.	Delivering and checking relevant and timely agro-advisory services to the farmers in the study area	100	10	3	4	3	560	II
2.	Reporting to the company agents/ agriculture officer any serious pest and disease problems and natural calamities prevailing in his area and also unusual/ inappropriate agro-advisory services.	10	70	9	26	5	414	XVI
3.	Visiting the farmers field on fixed day	99	4	6	3	8	543	IV
4.	Providing credit based agro- advisory services to the farmers	101	10	2	4	3	562	I
5.	Reporting to the company/ Department of Agriculture special achievements of farmers by using agro- advisory services	11	10	12	67	10	270	XXI
6.	Evaluating the agro- advisory services feasibility in field conditions.	5	7	99	6	3	365	XVII
7.	Ensuring quality, low cost agro- advisory services to the farmers	90	13	10	2	5	541	V
8.	Working out how to convince farmers to adopt the recommendations on agro-advisory services made during the training sessions.	19	6	18	72	5	312	XIX
9.	Motivating the farmers to adopt new and additional recommended agro-advisory services.	67	27	6	10	10	491	VII
10.	Conducting demonstrations/ campaign/ shows/ seminars on productive technologies related to different crops to farmers.	99	4	10	2	5	550	III
11.	Participating actively in training sessions conducted by company/ AO's to get knowledge on agro- advisory services.	57	36	9	6	10	478	VIII
12.	Arranging for company agents to visit the field in order to get solution when he is unable to get satisfactory solution during field visits/training programmes.	89	12	10	5	4	537	VI
13.	Maintaining a daily record of discussed agro-advisory services with farmers while farmers visit the shop.	10	90	7	10	3	454	XII
14.	Familiar with the availability and demand for agro-advisory services and agriculture market conditions.	35	44	29	3	9	453	XIII
15.	Holding the meeting with the Farmers Interest Groups and rural institutions to discuss location specific problems of farmers.	15	78	13	10	4	450	XIV
16.	Utilising the mass media to spread the agro-advisory services.	14	10	19	21	56	265	XXII
17.	Preparing training schedules based on required training content for farmers.	60	30	3	12	15	468	XI
18.	Estimating type of agro-advisory services requirements in my area.	35	58	13	10	4	470	X
19.	Implementing of government/ company sponsored agro- advisory related programmes.	20	5	28	62	5	333	XVIII
20.	Supervising the progress of adaption of agro-advisory services and ensure that farmers are aware of agro- advisory Services	8	5	10	90	7	277	XX
21.	Trying to get feedback from farmers regarding the working/progress of adaptation of agro- advisory services.	9	11	24	10	66	257	XXIII

22	Attending any other work assigned by company/ government authorities that do not conflict with the essential duties.	10	70	30	7	3	437	XV
23	Vigilant against outbreak of pest and diseases of different crops in my area.	11	9	4	10	86	209	XXIV
24	Working out the credit requirements and expenditure on agro- advisory services given to farmers annually.	37	54	19	3	7	471	IX

It was observed from Table 2 that the role 'Providing credit based agro- advisory services to the farmers' was ranked first with a total score of 562. This was followed by the roles 'Delivering and checking relevant and timely agro-advisory services to the farmers in the study area' (Total score of 560), 'Conducting demonstrations/ campaign/ shows/ seminars on productive technologies related to different crops to farmers' (Total score of 550), 'Visiting the farmers field on fixed day' (Total score of 543), and 'Ensuring quality, low cost agro-advisory services to the farmers' (Total score of 541) which were ranked Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth, respectively. Out of twenty four roles studied, the least performed role performed by the farm input dealers was 'Vigilant against outbreak of pest and diseases of different crops in my area' which ranked twenty fourth with total score of 209. The other least performed roles in the descending orders were 'Trying to get feedback from farmers regarding the working/progress of adaptation of agro- advisory services' (Rank XXIII, Total score =257), 'Utilizing the mass media to spread the agro-advisory services' (Rank XXII, Total score =265), 'Reporting to the company/Department of Agriculture special achievements of farmers by using agro-advisory services' (Rank XXI, Total score =270) and 'Supervising the progress of adaption of agro- advisory services and ensure that farmers are aware of agro-advisory services' (Rank XX, Total score =277).

It can be inferred that the farm input dealers performed their role with respect to delivering cost effective quality inputs and in-time to the farmers. They also conducted demonstrations to prove the value of the inputs they delivered and also given timely visits to the farmer's field. But they failed to collect the feedback of the farmers regarding the inputs and also about the agro-advisory service given by them. Because of this they could not report it to the respective company also.

Conclusion

- Findings of the study led to conclude that more than three-fifth of the farm input dealers have perceived medium role in transfer of technology. As farm input dealers are linked with supply and service of agricultural inputs, there is more reliance on farm input dealers by the farmers. So the farmers will approach them with easy access, high dependence, more credibility, clear intension and less ambiguity. Hence the necessary steps should be taken by the Department of Agriculture to improve the role performance of farm input dealers in transfer of technology by organizing need based training programmes for them and keeping them updated with latest technical know how.
- It can be inferred that the farm input dealers performed their role with respect to providing credit based agro-advisory services to the farmers and delivering cost effective quality inputs and in-time to the farmers. They also conducted demonstrations to prove the value of the inputs they delivered and also given timely visits to the farmer's field. But they failed to collect the feedback of the farmers regarding the inputs and also about the agro-advisory service given by them. Because of this they

could not report it to the respective company also. So, these farm input dealers should be motivated to collect feedback from the farmers about the inputs as well as advisory services and these feedback should be communicated to the concerned agencies. By using this feedback the farm input dealers may improve their role performance.

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