



ISSN (E): 2277- 7695
ISSN (P): 2349-8242
NAAS Rating: 5.23
TPI 2022; SP-11(1): 617-618
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www.thepharmajournal.com

Received: 16-11-2021
Accepted: 18-12-2021

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Knowledge of farm input dealers about selected major crops grown in the South Konkan

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Abstract

This paper examined the Knowledge level of farm input dealers about selected major crops grown in the South Konkan. 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 area 48.33 per cent of the farm input dealers had 'medium' knowledge level. Knowledge is supposed to be a prerequisite for action. The degree of knowledge of an individual about any phenomenon decides the magnitude of his action. Majority of farm input dealers under the study had adequate knowledge about improved farm technologies and inputs requirement for different technologies. Input dealers might have provided adequate information to the farmer customers regarding inputs required for different improved technologies. Findings of the study led to conclude that Nearly 50.00 per cent of the farm input dealers had medium level of knowledge about the crops grown in their area and there cultivation practices.

Keywords: knowledge, farm input dealers, south Konkan, major crops

Introduction

The input dealer is basically a businessman with or without a technically qualification and a service provider. In order to overcome the possible negative effects, it is necessary to make technical qualification in agriculture as mandatory for issuing dealership license to provide agro-advisory services besides selling agricultural inputs. The input dealer has no specificity for qualification to get license from the government and has inadequate knowledge about agricultural technology. So, training has to be provided to get better knowledge and skills to act as an extension service provider by competent institutes. Considering that the dealer network has spread out in almost all villages of the country and being an important mechanism to reach out to large farming community, it is felt necessary to expose them to diploma course and built their capacity in handling field problems and extension communication abilities while increasing their skills in dealing with inputs and agro-advisory services and discharging regulatory responsibilities. National Agricultural Policy and 10th plan approach paper stressed the need for reforms in agricultural extension of the country. Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India emphasized to have multi agency extension services such as multinational companies, corporate bodies, voluntary organizations, farmers associations and input dealers etc. National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) has designed Diploma in Agricultural Extension Services for Input Dealers (DAESI), a One Year Diploma Course which imparts formal agricultural education to the input dealers so that they can couple their extension services with business besides discharging regular responsibilities. Thus, the Indian farmer continues to depend more on different stakeholders of agriculture development mainly the input dealers than ever before. 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. (Ganiger, 2012) [1]. Keeping this in view the present study entitled "Knowledge of farm input dealers about selected major crops grown in the South Konkan" was undertaken".

Objectives of the study

To study the knowledge of farm input dealers about selected major crops grown in the study area.

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 with the help of teacher made knowledge test. The content of the knowledge test was composed in the form of questions. Comprehensive list of knowledge questions on production technologies in major crops in the study area were prepared based on production recommendations of the DBSKKV, Dapoli. A score of one was assigned for correct answer and zero for wrong answer for each item. 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

The knowledge of farm input dealers about selected major crops grown in the study area

Knowledge is operationalised as extent of production technologies of major crops known to input dealers in order to provide appropriate agro advisory services and input supply. The data regarding knowledge level of farm input dealers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the farm input dealers according to their knowledge level

Sl. No.	Knowledge level (Score)	Farm input dealers (N = 120)	
		Number	Percentage
1.	Low (Up to 18)	17	14.17
2.	Medium (19 to 21)	58	48.33
3.	High (22 and Above)	45	37.50
Total		120	100.00

From Table 1 it is seen that 48.33 per cent of the farm input dealers had 'medium' knowledge level, while 37.50 per cent farm input dealers had 'high' knowledge level. The farm input dealers with 'low' knowledge level were only 14.17 per cent. The average knowledge level score of the farm input dealers was 20.84. Knowledge is supposed to be a prerequisite for action. The degree of knowledge of an individual about any phenomenon decides the magnitude of his action. Majority of farm input dealers under the study had adequate knowledge about improved farm technologies and inputs requirement for different technologies. Input dealers might have provided adequate information to the farmer customers regarding inputs required for different improved technologies.

Conclusion

Nearly 50.00 per cent of the farm input dealers had medium level of knowledge about the crops grown in their area and there cultivation practices. This calls for giving more attention to increase the knowledge level of the farm input dealers and keep them abreast with latest technical know-how. The Department of Agriculture should organize training

programmes and other extension activities for the farm input dealers, so that they can get latest knowledge about the different recommendations of the SAUs for different crops grown in the region.

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