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Prashant Singh Kourav

M.Sc. Student, Department of Extension Education, JNKVV College of Agriculture, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, India

Kamini Bisht

Assistant Professor, Department of Extension Education, JNKVV College of Agriculture, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, India

Kalpna Shrivastava

M.Sc. Student, Department of Extension Education, JNKVV College of Agriculture, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, India

Role performance of agro input dealers in advisory services in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh

Prashant Singh Kourav, Kamini Bisht and Kalpna Shrivastava

Abstract

Among all the agencies, input dealers are larger in number and spread even in the interior areas of the country. Unlike other agencies they need not to go the farmers to provide the agro-advisory services. Farmers themselves approach the input dealers for advice while purchasing inputs. Considering the importance of role of input dealers in agro-advisory services, the present study on role performance of agro input dealers in advisory services was conducted in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh. The findings of the study revealed that majority of agro input dealers were in medium category of role performance followed by high and low. As far as constraints faced by input dealers in providing agro-advisory services to the farmer is considered, delay in payment by the farmers was one of the major problem faced by most of the agro-input dealers.

Keywords: agro input dealers, agro-advisory services, advice while purchasing inputs

Introduction

Improving rural livelihoods is now a stated goal among many developing countries. In most cases, achieving this goal involves increasing farm household income, which can both improve household food security and nutrition as far as increase access to health services and education for rural children. World Bank indicated that there are more than one million agricultural extension workers in developing countries and public agencies have spent over 10 billion dollars on public extension programmers in past five decades (Feder, 2007) [2].

In India, there are about 2.82 lakh practicing agro-input dealers, who are the prime source of farm information to the farming community. The first contact point for majority of farmers is the agro-input dealers. While purchasing different inputs required for farming operations, the farmer naturally tries to find out from the input dealer about the usage of inputs, both in terms of quality and quantity. Agricultural inputs and advisory services provide basis for quality production.

The scope of this investigation was confined to the study of role performance of agro-Input dealers in advisory services in Jabalpur block of Madhya Pradesh. Empirical knowledge derived out of this study was expected to be directly useful in designing effective extension strategies to improve upon the role of the input dealers in Jabalpur block of Madhya Pradesh. Further, the study was being of immense value to elicit the problems faced by the input dealers and their suggestions to overcome those problems. The eventual goal of this type of research was to shorten the time gap for agricultural information to reach for widespread use among the farmers.

Material and Methods

The study was conducted in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh. Out of seven blocks, Jabalpur block was selected purposively because the block had maximum number of agro-input dealers. As per the list provided by DDA office, Department of Farmers Welfare & Agriculture Cooperation, Jabalpur the total number of agro-input dealers in Jabalpur block were 104. All agro-input dealers were selected for the present study. Thus the sample size of the study consists of total 104 agro-input dealers.

Result

1. Role Performance of Agro input Dealers in Advisory Services

Eighteen roles of agro-input dealers were finalized after consultation with the experts. Thereafter, the respondents were asked to rate the agreement on four point continuum i.e. most often, often, seldom and never. The 18 roles were summed up and the respondents were categorized into three categories based on mean and standard deviation viz. low, medium and high.

Corresponding Author:

Prashant Singh Kourav

M.Sc. Student, Department of Extension Education, JNKVV College of Agriculture, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, India

Table 1: Role performance of input-dealers towards agro advisory services

S. No.	Statement	Response categories				Total score	Percent of score obtained
		Most often	Often	Seldom	Never		
1.	Delivering and checking relevant and timely agro advisory services to the farmers in the study area	19	61	16	08	299	71.88
2.	Report 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	38	46	15	05	325	78.13
3.	Visiting the farmers field on fixed day I To observe field operations, conditions of crops II To enquire the problems and suggest appropriate measures III To make a note to what extent recommendations of agro-advisory services have been adopted and reasons for non-adoption IV To detect the incidence of pests, diseases and natural disorders	25	49	20	10	297	71.39
4.	Provide credit based agro-advisory services to the farmers	26	56	13	09	307	73.80
5.	Report to the company/department of agriculture special achievements of farmers by using agro advisory services	16	68	16	04	304	73.08
6.	Evaluate the agro-advisory services feasibility in field conditions	15	64	16	09	293	70.43
7.	Ensuring quality, low cost agro-advisory services to the farmers	20	57	19	08	297	71.39
8.	Works out how to convince farmers to adopt the recommendations on agro-advisory services made during the training sessions	30	49	14	11	306	73.56
9.	Motivating the farmers to adopt new and additional recommended agro-advisory services	26	56	09	13	303	72.84
10.	Conduct demonstrations/campaign/seminars on productive technologies related to different crops to farmers	23	48	21	12	290	69.71
11.	Participate actively in training sessions conducted by company/ao's to get knowledge on agro advisory services	35	46	17	06	318	76.44
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 programs	11	65	24	04	291	69.95
13.	Maintain a daily record of discussed agro-advisory services with farmers while farmers visit the shop	35	41	21	07	312	75.00
14.	Familiar with the availability and demand for agro advisory services and agriculture market conditions	45	34	25	0	332	79.81
15.	Hold the meeting with the farmers interest groups and rural institutions to discuss location specific problems of farmers	11	38	35	20	248	59.62
16.	Utilizing the mass media to spread the agro advisory services	15	06	22	02	301	72.36
17.	Preparing training schedules based on required training content for farmers	12	60	23	09	283	68.03
18.	Implementation of govt./company sponsored agro-advisory related programs	07	65	24	08	279	67.07

The results presented in Table 1 revealed that majority i.e. 79.81 per cent of input dealers were 'Familiar with the availability and demand for agro advisory services and agriculture market conditions', this might be due to the fact that input dealers had perceived well about need of availability and demand for agro advisory services and agriculture market conditions.

About 78 per cent of input dealers had performed the role of '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', this might be due to the fact that input dealers wanted to get the solutions to provide appropriate control measures for the area specific problems in farmers field.

It is also clear from the data that 76.44 per cent agro-input dealers participate actively in training sessions conducted by company/AOs to get knowledge on agro advisory services followed by maintaining a daily record of discussed agro-advisory services with farmers while farmers visit the shop (75.00%), providing credit based agro- advisory services to the farmers (73.80%), works out how to convince farmers to adopt the recommendations on agro-advisory services made during the training sessions (73.56%), and report to the company/department of agriculture special achievements of farmers by using agro advisory services (73.08%).

Further, 72.84 per cent of the agro-input dealers performed the role of motivating the farmers to adopt new and additional

recommended agro-advisory services followed by utilizing the mass media to spread the agro advisory services (72.36%), delivering and checking relevant and timely agro advisory services to the farmers in the study area (71.88%), visiting the farmers field on fixed day (71.39%), ensuring quality, low cost agro-advisory services to the farmers (71.39%) and evaluate the agro-advisory services feasibility in field conditions (70.43%).

The data also shows 69.95, 69.71 and 59.62 per cent of agro-input dealers performed the role of 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 programs, conduct demonstrations/campaign/seminars on productive technologies related to different crops to farmers, hold the meeting with the farmer interest groups and rural institutions to discuss location specific problems of farmers, respectively.

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Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to their role performance in terms of agro-advisory services

S. No.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Low (18 to 36 score)	14	13.47
2.	Medium (37 to 54 score)	61	58.65
3.	High (55 to 72 score)	29	27.88
Total		104	100.00

The overall role performance of agro-input dealers presented in Table 2 revealed that 58.65 per cent were in medium role performance category and 27.88 per cent high role performance category and 13.47 per cent belonged to low role performance category. Therefore, it may be concluded that majority of agro-input dealers 58.65 per cent had medium level of role performance.

2. Problems encountered by input dealers in providing agro advisory service to the farmers

Multiple responses were taken to ascertain the problems faced by agro-input dealers. Various problems as reported by the respondents are presented in Table 4.23 The result revealed that majority of respondents (86.54%) were facing the problems of "Market competition" and ranked I followed by "Delay in payment by the farmers" (78.85%) and rank II, "Low knowledge of farmers about does of pesticides and their method of application" (72.12%) ranked III, "Farmers don't follow recommended rate of input application" (67.31%), "Sale of low quality products to the farmers by agents of local companies" (53.85%), "Lack of sufficient field experience"

(50.96%), "Non availability of transport facility" (46.15%), "Low profit on reputed company's product" (43.26%), ranked IV, V, VI, VII and VIII, respectively.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings regarding role performance of agro-input dealers revealed that majority of the respondents were having medium level of role performance. Regarding the problems faced by agro-input dealers in providing agro-advisory services to the farmers, delay in payment by the farmers, low knowledge of farmers about doses of pesticides and their method of application, sale of low quality products to the farmers by agents of local companies, lack of sufficient field experience, non-availability of transport facility were some of the problems reported by the respondents. An understanding of the factors and constraints faced by agro-input dealers in providing agro-advisory services to farmers will serve as a feedback to the planers and development agencies while involving agro-input dealers in implementation of any scheme.

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