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## Field problem analysis approaches after DAESI programme

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### Abstract

National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) launched an innovative programme namely, "Diploma in Agricultural Extension Services for Input Dealers (DAESI)" to enhance the technical competency of input dealers at various states. Behind of this programme initiation the main reason was that majority of the input dealers do not have technical knowledge on agriculture and formal agricultural education. But these are a prime source of farm information to the farming community in India. Most of the farmers in our country seek out the farm advice from Input dealers (MANAGE, 2012). In order to build their technical competency in agriculture MANAGE has launched the DAESI programme. This programme had also conducted in Dewas district during the years of 2017-18 and 2018-19. A study was conducted to analyse the impact of DAESI Programme on trained input dealers of Dewas district. The significant findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents have changed their approach in analysing the field problem after DAESI programme. They had expressed that they need Refresher Training programme. for updating their technical knowledge to sustain their business in future. Most of them are ready to pay for the refresher training. They felt that fluctuation of selling price of input due to seasonal demand, high cost of transportation, lack of need-based trainings are the major constraints faced by Agro-input dealers. The suggestions of respondents for improvement of DAESI programme with regard to duration, timings, number of field visits, study materials, methodology etc. were also assessed in present study.

**Keywords:** Agricultural extension, agro-input dealers, technical knowledge, refresher training

### Introduction

Agri-Input Dealers in the country are a prime source of farm information to the farming community, besides the supply of inputs and credit. However, majority of these dealers do not have formal agricultural education. In order to build their technical competency in agriculture and to facilitate them to serve the farmers better and to act as para – extension professionals, National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) has launched a self-financed "One-year Diploma in Agricultural Extension Services for Input Dealers (DAESI) Programme" during the year 2003. Due to positive impact of the programme, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Government of India has decided to implement this programme for Input dealers in all the States of the country. The programme aims to transform the Practicing Agricultural Inputs Dealers into the Para-Extension Professionals thereby, strengthening the Agricultural Extension System. This will enable the inputs dealers to serve the farmers better (Government of India, 2014) <sup>[3]</sup>. The programme has conducted once in a week at the district level, spread over a period of one year covering various areas of agriculture, business ethics, extension, acts and regulations of agri-inputs, etc. But after the DAESI programme, there was need to assess the approaches of input dealers in analyzing field problems, needs of refresher training programme, constraints faced by input dealers and suggestions to improve DAESI programme. As the programme has organized at district level, it is felt necessary to learn about various aspects of these objectives:

### Objectives

- To study the approaches of input dealers in analyzing field problem after DAESI programme.
- To assess the need for refresher training programme and areas of training after DAESI programme.
- To analyze the constraints faced by input dealers and suggestions to improve DAESI

programme.

### Methodology

MANAGE has conducted DAESI programme in 11 states during the year 2017-18 covering 2500 input dealers. DAESI programme also initiated in Dewas district at Krishi Vigyan Kendra. Two batches of input dealers under DEASI programme were selected purposively for study. 40 input dealers were registered in each batch of DAESI programme.

Thus the total 80 trained input dealers constituted the respondents of the study. The data were collected by using a pre-tested interview schedule and the results were analyzed using frequency, percentage and mean.

### Results and Discussion

The approaches of input dealers in analyzing the field problem after DAESI programme was assessed and presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Approach of Input Dealers in Analyzing Field Problem after DAESI Programme (N=80)

S. No.	Category	Number	Percent		
1.	Changed	63	78.75		
2.	Not changed	17	21.25		
1.1 Change in Input Dealers' Field Problem Analysis Approach after DAESI programme					
S. No.	Category	Before DAESI		After DAESI	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1.	Before giving advice, I analyze the problem duly discussing with farmers about the symptoms, the previous practices/ inputs applied	07	8.75	65	81.25
2.	I ask the farmers to bring specimens for diagnosis	15	18.75	63	78.75
3.	I consult the other trained input dealers before advising the farmers	23	28.75	42	52.50
4.	I consult the resource persons and facilitators before giving advice to the farmers	11	13.75	25	31.25
5.	I refer relevant study material given in DAESI programme	-	-	12	15.00
6.	I advise farmers to go for soil test and apply fertilizers as per the Soil Test Result	23	28.75	74	92.5
7.	I advise farmers to encourage beneficial insects in their fields	08	10	65	81.25
8.	I advise farmers on the importance of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides to ensure eco-friendly and quality produce to consumers	23	28.75	69	86.25
9.	I update the farmers about the programs and schemes of Dept. of Agriculture and guide them to consult the Department officials to avail the benefits	04	5	33	41.25

The result revealed in table 4 showed that 98 per cent of the respondents have changed their approach in analyzing the field problem after DAESI programme. Majority of the input dealers had expressed that they are not giving the insecticides, fungicides or any other agri-inputs without proper analysis like they were doing prior to DAESI programme. Instead, they had indicated that they discuss with the farmers to understand the practices adopted by them (81.25 percent), sometimes they ask the farmers to bring disease-affected specimens and visit farmer's field to observe the symptoms (78.75 percent), if required. They had also expressed that they have the contact numbers of all the resource persons who took classes throughout the programme period. They used to contact the resource persons, in case they were unable to diagnosis the problems and consult them before giving advice to farmers (31.25 percent). The trained dealers have formed WhatsApp group and hence, sometimes they share the symptoms through WhatsApp to get suggestions of the other

input dealers (52.50 percent). They also used to advice the farmers to go for soil test and soil test based fertilizer application (92.50 percent) as well as bio-pesticides to ensure eco-friendly and quality produce to consumers (86.25 percent). They also had updated to farmers about various schemes and programmes of different departments and guide them to consult the officials to avail the benefits (41.25 percent). They indicated that earlier they were dependent only on representatives of agri-business companies for information. But now their approach has changed totally to analyze the field level problems. Balasubramani N. (2017) revealed the similar studies.

### Need for Refresher Training Programme

The need for a refresher training program and the areas of training required for the trained input dealers were assessed and are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Need for Refresher Training Programme and Areas of Training(N=80)

S. No.	Category	Number	Percent				
Need for Refresher Training Programme							
1.	Needed	71	88.75				
2.	Not needed	09	11.25				
Areas of Training Needs of Trained Input Dealers in Refresher Training Programme							
S. No.	Areas of Training	Most needed		Needed		Not Needed	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1.	Agricultural inputs	68	85.00	10	12.50	02	2.50
2.	Pest & disease management	71	88.75	08	10.00	01	1.25
3.	Crop diversification	21	26.25	34	42.50	25	31.25
4.	Soil health management	53	66.25	17	21.25	10	12.50
5.	Irrigation/Water management	25	31.25	31	38.75	24	30.00
6.	Weed management	47	58.75	26	32.50	07	8.75

7.	Processing and value addition	10	12.50	21	26.25	49	61.25
8.	Marketing	31	38.75	28	35.00	21	26.25
9.	Bio-control agents / Bio-pesticides	42	52.50	23	28.75	15	18.75
10.	Precautions in handling, storing and use of antidotes in case of accidents	62	77.50	13	16.25	05	6.25
11.	Schemes and Programs	21	26.25	43	53.75	16	20.00
12.	Weather information	18	22.50	20	25.00	42	52.50
13.	Farm machinery / implements	05	6.25	16	20.00	59	73.75

Table 2 clearly indicates that majority of the input dealers (88.75 per cent) had expressed that they need Refresher Training programme. They had realized the importance of regular trainings for updating their technical knowledge to sustain their business in future. Most of them are ready to pay for the refresher training. Hence, the district level or state level organizations can organise two to three day training programme every year on recent advances in agriculture. Babu *et al.* (2011) <sup>[10]</sup> revealed the similar results.

They have also indicated the most needed topics for refresher training programme as Pest and Disease Management (88.75 per cent), Agricultural Inputs (85.00 per cent), Precautions in Handling, Storing and Use of Antidotes in Case of Accidents (77.50 per cent), Soil Health Management (66.25 per cent), Weed Management (58.75 per cent), Bio-Control Agents Bio-Pesticides (52.50 per cent), Marketing (38.75 per cent), Irrigation/Water management (31.25 per cent) Schemes and Programs (26.25 per cent), Crop diversification (26.25 per cent), Weather Information (22.50 per cent), etc. The training institutes may consider the above topics while organizing refresher trainings to meet the needs of input dealers. Singh *et al.* (2015) <sup>[5]</sup> found the similar studies.

### Reasons for Farmer's Access to Input Dealers

The reasons why farmers are coming to the input dealers as their customers are analyzed and presented in table 3.

**Table 3:** Reasons for Farmer's Access to Input Dealers (N=80)

S. No.	Category	Number	Percent
1.	Proximity	56	70.00
2.	Low price	55	68.75
3.	Easy accessibility	69	86.25
4.	Quality of input	58	72.50
5.	Timely availability	75	93.75
6.	Relevant and practical solution	73	91.25
7.	No alternative available	19	23.75

The result indicated in above table that reasons for farmer's approach / access to input dealers' shop. 93.25 per cent of the respondents indicated that timely availability and 91.25 per cent indicated that relevant and practical solution given by

the dealers were the main reasons for farmers' visit to their shop. Easy accessibility (86.25 per cent), Quality of input (72.50 per cent), Proximity (70.00 per cent), Low price of inputs (68.75 per cent) etc., are various other reasons for farmer's visit to a particular input dealer's shop.

### Constraints Faced by Agro-input Dealers

Various constraints faced by the input dealers are collected, analyzed and presented in table 4:

**Table 4:** Constraints Faced by Agro-input Dealers (N=80)

S. No.	Constraints	Number	Percent
1.	Lack of capital	61	76.25
2.	Non-availability of bank loan	35	43.75
3.	Fluctuation of selling price of input due to seasonal demand and	75	93.75
4.	High cost in transportation	62	77.50
5.	Lack of need-based training	52	65.00
6.	In adequate knowledge in maintaining stock book and sales register of the product	29	36.25
7.	Lack of technical knowledge of the retailers about brands of product	15	18.75
8.	Delay in renewal of license	45	56.25

The result revealed in table 4 showed that 93.75 per cent of the respondents felt that fluctuation of selling price of input due to seasonal demand is one of the main problems. High cost of transportation (7.50 per cent), lack of capital (76.25 per cent) lack of need-based training (65.00 per cent), delay in renewal of license (56.25 per cent), non-availability of bank loan (43.75 per cent), inadequate knowledge in maintaining stock book and sales register of the product (36.25 per cent), lack of technical knowledge of the retailers about brands of product (18.75 per cent) etc. are some of the other problems of input dealers.

### Suggestions for Improvement of DAESI Programme

The suggestions of respondents for improvement of DAESI programme with regard to duration, timings, number of field visits, study materials, methodology etc., were assessed and presented in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Suggestions to Improve DAESI Programme (N=80)

S. No.	Suggestion	Category	Number	Percent
1.	Duration of Programme	Increase	-	-
		Decrease	63	78.75
		No change	17	21.25
2.	Timings of programme	Increase	17	21.25
		Decrease	35	43.75
		No Change	28	35.00
3.	Interval of classes	Increase	60	75.00
		Decrease	09	11.25
		No change	11	13.75
4.	Number of session per day	Increase	05	6.25
		Decrease	13	16.25

		No change	62	77.50
5.	Number of practical classes	Increase	68	85.00
		Decrease	02	2.50
		No Change	10	12.50
		Increase	73	91.25
6.	Number of field visits	Decrease	02	2.50
		No change	05	6.25
		Require more	65	81.25
7.	Study material	Require less	02	2.50
		No change	13	16.25
		Require change	04	5.00
8.	Methodology of programme	Slightchangeis required	07	8.75
		No change	69	86.25
		Require modification	02	2.50
9.	Content and curriculum/syllabus	Slight modification is required	04	5.00
		No change	74	92.50

The result revealed as per the above table that majority of the input dealers had indicated that the duration and timings of the existing programme should be decrease, interval of classes should be increase (75.00 percent). There was no requirement to changenumber of sessions per day (77.50 percent), methodology of the programme (86.25 percent) and content and curriculum/syllabus (92.50 percent). However, 91.25 per cent of the respondents suggested increasing the number of field visits, 85.00 per cent of them suggested increasing the number of practical classes and 81.25 per cent of them felt some more study material is required during the programme.

### Conclusion

The presented study provided insightful views on knowledge levels of input dealers through Diploma in Agriculture Extension Services for Input dealers Programme. The findings clearly shown that the diploma programme had The present study provided insightful views on field problem analysis approaches after DAESI programme for input dealers. The findings clearly shown that maximum input dealers have changed their approach in analyzing the field problem after DAESI programme. They indicated that earlier they were dependent only on representatives of agri-business companies for information. But now their approach has changed totally to analyze the field level problems. They had also expressed the need of refresher training programme and realized the importance of regular trainings for updating their technical knowledge to sustain their business in future. The study reveals that DAESI programme has helped the input dealers to gain confidence in technology dissemination. Hence, in the post-DAESI period also the input dealers had given continuous training to keep them updated with latest technologies and innovations so as to make them as para-extension professionals.

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