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RESEARCH ARTICLE :

Study the type of advice given and constraints experienced in running the agricultural input centers

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SUMMARY : Agriclinics are envisaged to provide expert services and advice to farmers on cropping practices, technology dissemination, crop protection from pest and diseases, market trends and prices of various crops in the markets and also clinical services for animal health etc., which would enhance productivity of crops and animals. Therefore, the present study was conducted to study the type of advice given and constraints experienced in running the agricultural input centres by the agricultural input dealers. The research study was carried out in 9 tahsils of Ratnagiri district in Konkan region of Maharashtra State during 2011-2012. Result of this study revealed that that two-third (65.33 %) of the respondents from region had 'fair' advisory service about their role in transfer of farm technology while 18.67 per cent of the respondents had 'good' advisory service about their role in transfer of farm technology. Further 16.00 per cent of the respondents had 'poor' advisory service about their role in transfer of farm technology. Similarly in case of constraints majority (97.33 %) of the agricultural input dealers faced the problem of 'availability of labour', followed by 'lack of organization of dealers (81.33 %) 'delay in effecting payment by farmers towards the purchase' (77.33 %), 'transportation' (74.67 %) and availability of agricultural input.

KEY WORDS :
Advice given, Constraints experienced, Input dealers

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The agricultural sector is knowledge intensive. Agricultural research and extension are two important factors of agricultural development. To improve and sustain farm productivity, farmers require information on new technologies, best practices, inputs, and post-harvest information related to marketing and prices. An efficient extension system capable of timely dissemination of need based farm technology among farming communities is of paramount importance for achieving sustained growth in agriculture. The system of transfer of technology from research stations to the farming community has played a crucial role in modernizing agriculture. For many years' agriculture extension was mainly the monopoly of the public sector. The traditional information broker between the farmer and some of this information has been the public-sector agricultural extension agent. But over the past few decades public-sector extension has received much criticism due to limited reach and relevance, and high cost of

operation. However, with the changing scenario about by globalization, commercialization and the free trade regime, the scope of agriculture has enlarged and seen a dramatic shift. There has been a growing recognition that public extension by itself cannot meet the specific needs of various regions and different classes of farmers.

Government of India constituted a steering committee on agriculture and allied sectors under the chairmanship of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan. The committee, among others, suggested creation of agriclinics and agribusiness centers managed by agri-graduates so as to provide consultancy services to the farming community in rural areas.

Subsequently, a scheme for setting up of agriclinics and agribusiness centers by agricultural graduates was announced by the then finance ministers on February 28, 2001 to NABARD has formulated a model scheme for financing agriclinics and agribusiness contents. In the meanwhile NABARD in consultation with Ministry of Agriculture and selected banks formulated a scheme for this purpose while National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) identified 66 training institutes throughout the country for imparting training to agri-graduates. The scheme is being implemented with the help of SFAC. The scheme was later approved by the parliamentary consultative committee of Ministry of Agriculture on August 22, 2001.

These centres will provide a package of soil and input testing facilities and other consultancy services. They will strengthen the transfer of technology and extension services and also provide self-employment opportunities to technically trained agricultural graduates.

Agriclinics are envisaged to provide expert services and advice to farmers on cropping practices, technology dissemination, crop protection from pest and diseases, market trends and prices of various crops in the markets and also clinical services for animal health etc., which would enhance productivity of crops and animals.Therefore, the present study was conducted to study the type of advice given and constraints experienced in running the agricultural input centers by the agricultural input dealers was undertaken with the following objectives :

- To study the type of advice given by the agricultural input dealers.
- To study the constraints experienced in running the agricultural input centers.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

Konkan region consists of five districts namely Thane, Mumbai, Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg. Ratnagiri district from Konkan region was selected purposively, as the number of agriculture input dealers in these districts was comparatively more than those of other districts in the respective region. The Ratnagiri district consists nine tahsil. All tahsil were selected namely, Ratnagiri, Chiplun, Sangmeshwar, Guhagar, Rajapur, Dapoli, Khed, Lanja and Mandangad. A list of licenses issued to the fertilizer dealers in the tahsils of Ratnagiri district was obtained from Agricultural Development Officer, Zilla Parishadand Ratnagiri district.

For study purpose, the proprietor of agricultural input dealers was selected as respondents by random sampling. Respondents were selected which provides all services like fertilizers, pesticides, seeds, animal health care and engineering material. For this study, 75 agriculture input dealers were drawn from selected tahsils of district with help randomization.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Making available the agro- inputs alone by agricultural input dealers is not enough. Their judicious use is even more important. The main constraint in sustainably increasing crop production is not availability of technology, but how to deliver the same to the farmer's gate. This transfer of technology from laboratory to farm would have been impossible without the participation of the agricultural input dealers who have played a pivotal role in getting farmers to adopt fertilizers, new technology and also improved farm practices. Agricultural input dealers has, therefore, to assist, guide and render advice to farmers on various aspects of farming such as planning cropping programme, judicious use of fertilizers and insecticides, subsidiary occupation and other allied aspects of farming. Scoring was done as 2 for 'always', 1 for 'sometimes' and 0 for 'no'.

The observations regarding the type of advice given by the agricultural input dealers about their role in transfer of farm technology are shown in Table 1.

It is seen from Table 1 that two-third (65.33 %) of the respondents from region had 'fair' advisory service about their role in transfer of farm technology while 18.67 per cent of the respondents had 'good' advisory service about their role in transfer of farm technology. Further

16.00 per cent of the respondents had 'poor' advisory service about their role in transfer of farm technology. The average advisory service score of the respondents from Konkan region was 24.42.

It seen from Table 2 that almost all the (100.00 %) agricultural input dealers from region provided the

Table 1 : Distribution of the respondents according to their advisory services about transfer of farm technology (n=75)

Sr. No.	Advisory service	Respondents	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Poor	12	16.00
2.	Fair	49	65.33
3.	Good	14	18.67
	Total	75	100.00

Table 2 : Advisory service given by agricultural input dealers about role in transfer of agricultural technology (n=75)

Sr. No.	Statement	Respondents	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Different improved varieties of crops	75	100.00
2.	Type of chemical fertilizers, dose, content, time, nutrient content, method of application etc.	75	100.00
3.	Control of pest and disease of crops	75	100.00
4.	Methods of application, dose, time and rate of insecticides, fungicides, herbicides etc.	75	100.00
5.	Improved methods of irrigation	75	100.00
6.	Storage of agricultural produce	48	64.00
7.	Hiring rate of improved implements and equipments	69	92.00
8.	Subsidiary occupation		
	Milk production	42	56.00
	Poultry	50	66.67
	Goat rearing	51	68.00
	Piggery	21	28.00
	Emu rearing	25	33.33
9.	Soil testing	75	100.00
10.	Training for operating new machinery and adopting of techniques	37	49.33
11.	Improved technology	75	100.00
12.	Repairing sprayers, dusters, tractor, and other machinery	49	65.33
13.	Production of vermicomposting	71	94.67
14.	Agricultural subsidy and loan	70	93.33
15.	Farmer's social problems and their solutions	45	60.00

Table 3 : Constraints faced by the fertilizer dealers in marketing of fertilizers and transfer of farm technology (n=75)

Sr. No.	Constraints	Respondents	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Economical problem	51	68.00
2.	Technical guidance	21	28.00
3.	Availability of agricultural input and supplying of input	40	53.33
4.	Competition with other agricultural input dealers	23	30.67
5.	Communication and discussion	15	18.67
6.	Labour availability	73	97.33
7.	Management	14	18.67
8.	Place of dealing center	22	29.33
9.	Lack of organization of dealers	61	81.33
10.	Transportation	56	74.67
11.	Delay in effecting payment by farmers towards the purchase	58	77.33

information to every farmer about different improved varieties of crops, type of chemical fertilizers, dose, content, time, nutrient content, method of application etc., control of pest and disease of crops, methods of application, dose, time and rate of insecticides, fungicides, herbicides etc., improved methods of irrigation, soil testing, improved technology. While 94.67 per cent of the respondents provided the information regarding the production of vermicomposting and 93.33 per cent of the respondents provided the information regarding the agricultural subsidy and loan. Followed by 92.00 per cent of the respondents provided the information regarding the hiring rate of improved implements and equipment's, while 68.00 and 66.67 per cent of the respondents provided the information regarding goat rearing and poultry rearing, respectively, while many of the respondents provided the information regarding storage of agricultural produce, milk production, piggery, emu rearing, training for operating new machinery and adopting of techniques, repairing of sprayers, dusters, tractor and other machinery. While 60.00 per cent of the respondents provided the advisory service regarding the farmer's social problems and their solutions followed by 01.33 per cent of respondents provide agricultural consultancy service.

Constraints faced by the fertilizer dealers in marketing of fertilizers and transfer of farm technology:

It was assumed that the agricultural input dealers might be facing some problems in their enterprise. The present study revealed some constraints faced by the respondent dealers, those are listed in Table 3.

It is observed from Table 3 that majority (97.33 %) of the agricultural input dealers faced the problem of 'availability of labour', followed by 'lack of organization of dealers (81.33 %) 'delay in effecting payment by farmers towards the purchase' (77.33 %), 'transportation' (74.67 %), availability of agricultural input and supplying of input (53.33 %) and considerable number of the dealers faced the constraints namely 'communication and discussion', 'management', 'technical guidance' and 'place of dealing centre'.

A work on similar line was carried out by several workers (Akarte, 1986; Bodhale and Jadhav, 1986; Mahajan and Khot, 2000; Sarda and Gill, 2005 and Todase, 2010).

Conclusion :

Study brought out that the agricultural inputs dealers from Ratnagiri district of Konkan regions had 'fair' advisory service about their role in transfer of farm technology. So, efforts need to be made to equip them with upto date knowledge and skills about agricultural inputs and their use. This could help them in providing quality service and advice to be needy farmers and major constraints faced by the agricultural input dealers namely, economical, availability of labour, lack of organization of dealers, late for getting rupees from farmers, transportation, availability of agricultural input and place of dealing centre and supplying of input. The concerned agencies and individuals may concentrate their attention on resolving these constraints, particularly on distribution of fertilizers, regular supply of technical guidance and linkage system of fertilizer distribution.

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