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Constraints faced by agri-input dealers in performance of extension roles to farmers in Chhattisgarh

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Abstract

The research study was conducted to study the constraints faced by the agri-input. in Chhattisgarh plains of Chhattisgarh state. The sample was constituted 150 farm input dealers drawn from four district Raipur, Rajnandgaon, Raigarh and Dhamtari districts of Chhattisgarh. The respondents were interviewed with the help of a specially designed schedule for their challenges faced by them while providing proper quality of inputs and extension services to the farmers. A total seven type of major constraints were identified *viz* It is noted that financial constraints is ranked first (I) with weighted mean score 3.98. The constraints in product performance are ranked second (II) with weighted mean score 3.95. Managerial constraints is ranked third (III) with weighted mean score 3.42 followed by constraints faced in delivery of extension services to the farmers with weighted mean score of 3.05 Constraints in managing the farmers' problem is ranked fifth (V) with weighted mean score 2.51 and constraints in availability of inputs is ranked last (VI) due to weighted mean score 2.33 among the all the constraints. Seasonality of agri-input trade is a major problem related to input-dealers.

Keywords: Factors, constraints, input dealers, performance

Introduction

Agricultural development in India is very important because total of 58% of Indian population (IBEF, 2021). When purchasing various agril inputs required for agricultural activities, the farmer will naturally try to find out both the quality and quantity using the input dealer (C. Madhu Latha 2021)^[9]. Notably, the adoption of advanced technologies is hindered by widespread ignorance among farmers (Gupta *et al.* 2020)^[6], emphasizing the critical role of informed decision-making in fostering sustainable agricultural development (Sinha, 2018)^[18]. Agri- input dealers playing a tremendous role in reaching the farmers by performing the dual role of providing Agri-inputs as well as technological back up to the farmers informally (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2017)^[4]. Technical qualifications in agriculture are mandatory to overcome potential adverse effects, to sell farm inputs as well as to issue dealership licenses to provide farm-advisory services. Several shifts of technology studies have indicated that input dealers are more likely to contact farmers than from other sources. Therefore, agricultural development has a leading position in the field among input dealers Agri-input dealers are the second most important source of farm information after progressive farmers in rural areas (Chandra Shekara *et al.*, 2007; Adhiguru *et al.*, 2009)^[17, 1]. It's also having a significant role in transforming from production driven to market driven extension approach (Kumar *et al.* 2012)^[8].

Input dealers serve as an important link between the manufacturers and the farmers. So, they are responsible to disseminate latest farm technology up to the field level especially in the era of the free economy and the world trade organization (Khose, 2004)^[7]. Agronomic practices for seeds, pesticides and information on fertilizers were three important services provided to farmers by agri- input dealers Etyang (2013)^[5]. Leveraging their strategic positioning, profound understanding, and accessible nature, input dealers are instrumental in fostering the adoption of scientific farming practices, which inherently hinges upon farmers' knowledge base Nain & Chandel, (2013)^[11]. Hence, there is a pronounced emphasis on prioritizing localized information sources for fostering credibility (Bhagat *et al.*, 2004; Nain *et al.*, 2015; Panda., 2019)^[3, 12, 13]. For adequate food sufficiency, farm inputs need to be obtainable, of good value and at a reasonable price. Agricultural Inputs aid increases in agricultural production. They are important for improving the yield and incomes of smallholder farmers in the less-developed nations. Nellikoppa, told that the respondents expressed the constraints such as less coverage of information related to latest plant protection chemicals and varieties in the course curriculum. Major problems faced by agri-input dealers were difficulty to make credit availability told by Anitha (2005)^[2] and Singh (2015)^[19]. Delay in payment from farmers is major problem faced by the input-dealers told by Sharma (2017)^[16].

Methodology

The study was carried out in four purposely of Raipur, Rajnandgaon, Raigarh and Dhamtari, districts of Chhattisgarh plains. In this way a minimum of 150 respondents were expected to provide the data for this investigation during 2019-20. The data was collected by using a well-prepared Questionnaire. A questionnaire is a research instrument that consists of a set of questions or other types of prompts that aims to collect information from the respondent. The open-end questions were also asked to the input dealers and considered for their useful suggestions in this way the collected data were classified, tabulated and analyzed as per objective of this study for drawing meaningful interpretation of the received responses. The statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and rank were entertained for rationality of data under study.

Results and Discussion

Constraints faced by agri-input dealers' performance of extension roles to farmers

The data pertaining to Table No. 1. It reveals various Constraints of DAESI programme 2019-20 faced by the respondents. Majority of the respondents expressed the bottlenecks such It is difficult for an input dealer to pay Rs.20,000as course fee. (Which is ranked first, followed the

duration for the diploma course of 48 weeks was very lengthy. which is ranked second, the course should be open for all input dealers rather than restricting only for the dealers who have passed 10th standard examination. which is ranked third, there is Less number of skill oriented practical classes in DAESI programme are conducted. which is ranked fourth, Classes in Sundays and market holidays affect our business. which is ranked fifth, the distance is far away from home to the training institute which creates difficulty. which is ranked sixth, there was no accommodation facility in the training institute which is ranked seventh, the course curriculum does not cover all necessary chapters required for input dealers which is ranked eighth, Less number of field visits or exposure visits was organized to different institutions and agro- industries. which is ranked ninth and There is no mechanism of contacts with resource persons after the diploma programme, which is ranked tenth were the bottlenecks expressed by the agri-input dealers. This result reflects that majority of them thinks it is difficult for an input dealer to pay Rs.20,000 as course fee is the most important constraint of DAESI 2019-20 which requires more emphasis whereas the "there is no mechanism of contacts with resource persons after the diploma programme is the least important bottleneck of DAESI 2019-20 which require least emphasis.

Table 1: constraints of DAESI program expressed by the respondents during training programme. (n=150)

Sr. No.	Statements	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Wt. mean	Rank
1	It is difficult for an input dealer to pay Rs.20,000as course fee.	119	23	5	3	0	4.8	I
		79.33%	15.33%	3.33%	1.67%	0.00%		
2	The duration for the diploma course of 48 weeks was very lengthy.	109	41	0	0	0	4.73	II
		72.66%	27.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%		
3	The course should be open for all input dealers rather than restricting only for the dealers who have passed 10th standard examination.	113	19	2	13	3	4.51	III
		75.33%	12.66%	1.33%	8.66%	2.00%		
4	Less number of skill oriented practical classes in DAESI programme are conducted.	61	70	19	0	0	4.42	IV
		40.66%	58.33%	12.66%	0.00%	0.00%		
5	Classes in Sundays and market holidays affect our business.	68	70	12	0	0	4.37	V
		45.33%	46.66%	8.00%	0.00%	0.00%		
6	The distance is far away from home to the training institute which creates difficulty.	33	65	15	37	0	3.62	VI
		22.00%	43.33%	10.00%	24.66%	0.00%		
7	There was no accommodation facility in the training institute.	52	31	19	39	9	3.56	VII
		34.66%	20.66%	13.33%	26.00%	6.00%		
8	There is no mechanism of contacts with resource persons after the diploma programme.	2	38	15	83	12	2.57	VIII
		1.33%	25.33%	10.00%	55.33%	8.00%		
9	The course curriculum does not cover all necessary chapters required for input dealers	41	66	0	29	14	3.33	IX
		27.33%	44.00%	0.00%	19.33%	11.67%		
10	Less number of field visits or exposure visits was organized to different institutions and agro- industries.	5	80	15	42	8	3.22	X
		3.33%	53.33%	10.00%	28.00%	5.33%		

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=Undecided, DA=Disagree, SDA= Strongly disagree

From the given table No. 2, it is clear that the statement "Farmer purchase seeds and pesticides on credit and are unable to pay back on time" was ranked first (I) as the major problem in financial constraints similarly Sharma (2017)^[16] stated that majority of the input-dealers face problem of delay in payment. The statement "Branded products have very less margin" was ranked second (II), "There is no direct financial scheme for the Agri- input dealer from the government" was ranked third (III), "Bank hesitates in

sanctioning loan to private Agri-input dealer" was ranked forth (IV). The poor domestic infrastructure and limited access to agricultural credit (including seasonal credit) also undermine the effect and equitable participation in agricultural inputs trade (Sanchez, 2005)^[15]. The statement "When a product expires it causes a direct loss to agri-input dealers and companies do not take it back." was ranked last (V).

Table 2: Distribution of the respondent according to financial constraints faced by them. (n=150)

Sr. No.	Statements	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Wt. mean	Rank
1	Farmer purchase seeds and pesticides on credit and are unable to pay back on time.	113	19	2	13	3	4.51	I
		75.33	12.66	1.33	8.66	2.00		
2	Branded products have very less margin	61	70	19	0	0	4.42	II
		40.66	58.33	12.66	0.00	0.00		
3	There is no direct financial scheme for the Agri-input dealer from the government.	68	70	12	0	0	4.37	III
		45.33	46.66	8.00	0.00	0.00		
4	Bank hesitates in sanctioning loan to private Agri-input dealer.	52	31	19	39	9	3.56	IV
		34.66	20.66	13.33	26.00	6.00		
5	When a product expires it causes a direct loss to agri-input dealers and companies do not take it back.	18	60	0	54	18	3.03	V
		12.00	40.00	0.00	36.00	11.67		

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=Undecided, DA=Disagree, SDA= Strongly disagree

The above Table No. 3 shows that the statement “I face major hurdle from farmer when, the sold seed fails to germinate” was ranked first (I) in managerial constraints followed by the statement “I find difficulty to sell pesticides which has short span of expiry date” was ranked second (II),

“I find difficulty in selling seeds with short span of expiry” statement was ranked third (III) and the statement “I find difficulty to contact with other Agri-input dealer” was ranked last (VI).

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents according to managerial constraints (n=150)

S. No.	Statements	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Wt. mean	Rank
1	I face major hurdle from farmer when, the sold seed fails to germinate.	109	41	0	0	0	4.73	I
		72.66%	27.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%		
2	I find difficulty to sell pesticides which has short span of expiry date.	18	94	3	31	4	3.62	II
		12.00%	62.66%	1.33%	20.66%	2.66%		
3	I find difficulty in selling seeds with short span of expiry.	26	85	4	32	3	3.6	III
		17.33%	56.66%	2.66%	21.33%	2.00%		
4	I find difficulty to pay tax in new GST system.	24	77	0	47	2	3.33	IV
		16.00%	51.33%	0.00%	31.33%	1.33%		
5	I find difficulty to keep extra staff in my business.	22	41	3	81	3	2.98	V
		14.00%	27.33%	2.00%	54.00%	2.00%		
6	I find difficulty to contact with other Agri-input dealer.	0	14	3	128	5	2.27	VI
		0.00%	13.33%	2.00%	85.33%	3.33%		

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=Undecided, DA=Disagree, SDA= Strongly disagree

The above Table 4 shows that the statement “I face problem from farmers if the performance of inputs are poor” was ranked as first (I) in constraints in product performance followed by the statement “I face problem from farmers in case of complete failure of inputs” was ranked second (II). The statement “I face problem due to the selling of spurious

product by company” was ranked third (III) and “I face problem from farmers if there is an untimely application of inputs by farmers” was ranked forth (IV) and the statement “I face problem due to the lack of knowledge on part of farmers to use pesticides” was ranked last (V).

Table 4: Distribution of the respondent as per their constraints faced in product performance (n=150)

S. No.	Statements	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Wt. mean	Rank
1	I face problem from farmers if the performance of inputs are poor.	106	17	5	20	2	4.35	I
		70.00%	11.33%	3.33%	13.33%	1.33%		
2	I face problem from farmers in case of complete failure of inputs.	80	50	3	17	0	4.28	II
		53.33%	33.33%	2.00%	11.33%	0.00%		
3	I face problem due to the selling of spurious product by company.	61	69	12	8	0	4.25	III
		40.66%	46.00%	8.00%	5.33%	0.00%		
4	I face problem from farmers if there is an untimely application of inputs by farmers.	33	65	15	37	0	3.62	IV
		22.00%	43.33%	10.00%	24.66%	0.00%		
5	I face problem due to the lack of knowledge on part of farmers to use pesticides.	25	65	0	45	15	3.27	V
		16.67%	43.33%	0.00%	30.00%	10.00%		

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=Undecided, DA=Disagree, SDA= Strongly disagree

As per the Table 5 it was found that the statement “Selling subsidised product is difficult as government delays in reimbursing the money.” was ranked first (I) among the constraints faced by Agri-input dealers in delivery of extension services to the farmers followed by the statement “Marketing subsidised products means an extra load on the

part of input dealers due to accounting problem.” was ranked second (II). The statement “Once farmers get subsidy on some products they start asking for subsidy on every product.” was ranked third (III) while the statement “I find difficulty in understanding language or technique delivered by private company” was ranked last (XII).

Prajapati *et al.*, (2012)^[14] reported the agri-input dealers had medium level of knowledge and Awareness of time methods quantity & number of spray, diseases, IPM and bio control

were the major areas of training need reported by majority of the pesticide dealers

Table 5: Distribution of respondent according to the constraints faced in delivery of extension services. (n=150)

S. No.	Statements	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Wt. mean	Rank
1	Selling subsidised product is difficult as government delays in reimbursing the money.	119	23	5	3	0	4.8	I
		79.33%	15.33%	3.33%	1.67%	0.00%		
2	Marketing subsidised products means an extra load on the part of input dealers due to accounting problem.	82	45	0	23	0	4.2	II
		54.66%	30.00%	0.00%	15.33%	0.00%		
3	Once farmers get subsidy on some products they start asking for subsidy on every product.	41	66	0	29	14	3.33	III
		27.33%	44.00%	0.00%	19.33%	11.67%		
4	Selling subsidized product is more time taking.	5	80	15	42	8	3.22	IV
		3.33%	53.33%	10.00%	28.00%	5.33%		
5	I find difficulty in managing representative from private company to organise farmers' field demonstration.	8	59	16	54	13	2.96	V
		5.33%	39.33%	10.66%	36.00%	8.66%		
6	It is difficult to convince farmer that more fertilizer does not always mean more yield.	5	68	10	47	20	2.93	VI
		3.33%	45.33%	6.66%	31.33%	13.33%		
7	It is difficult to convince farmer that more pesticide does not always mean more yield.	3	63	17	62	5	2.91	VII
		2.00%	40.83%	11.33%	41.33%	3.33%		
8	It is difficult to go to for farm visit due to bad connectivity of roads.	7	46	18	57	22	2.68	VIII
		4.66%	30.66%	12.00%	38.00%	14.66%		
9	Farmers do not always follow the recommended dose.	3	49	0	86	12	2.63	IX
		2.00%	32.33%	0.00%	57.33%	8.00%		
10	I find it difficult to allocate resource (capital, place) for holding meetings conducted by companies for the farmers.	0	42	11	80	17	2.52	X
		0.00%	28.00%	7.33%	53.33%	11.33%		
11	I am not much interested in visiting the farmer's field.	2	34	0	112	2	2.42	XI
		1.33%	22.66%	0.00%	74.66%	1.33%		
12	I find difficulty in understanding language or technique delivered by private company.	0	6	22	87	35	2.06	XII
		0.00%	6.67%	14.66%	58.00%	23.33%		

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=Undecided, DA=Disagree, SDA= Strongly disagree

From Table No.6 it was evident that the statement “Quantity of demanded agri-inputs supplied by the company is not sufficient to fulfil the need of the farmers” was ranked first (I) as the major constraints in availability of inputs to the input dealers. The statement “I find difficulty to get inputs timely from company at peak demand period” was ranked

second (II), and the statement “I find difficulty in getting all the inputs in same brand” was ranked third (III), “I find difficulty to get inputs timely demand of the farmers” was ranked forth (IV) and the statement “I find difficulty to get inputs seasonal demand of certain products” was ranked last (V).

Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to the problems faced by them in timely availability of inputs. (n=150)

S. No.	Statements	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Wt. mean	Rank
1	Agri-inputs supplied by the company are not enough to fulfil the needs of the farmers.	0	32	0	72	16	2.4	I
		0.00%	26.67%	0.00%	60.00%	13.33%		
2	I find difficulty to get inputs timely from company at peak demand period.	5	30	6	88	21	2.38	II
		3.33%	20.00%	4.00%	57.66%	14.00%		
3	I find difficulty in getting all the inputs in same brand.	0	27	11	103	9	2.37	III
		0.00%	18.00%	7.33%	68.66%	6.00%		
4	I find difficulty to get inputs timely demand of the farmers.	6	33	2	85	24	2.35	IV
		4.00%	22.00%	1.33%	56.66%	16.00%		
5	I find difficulty to get inputs seasonal demand of certain products.	0	24	2	96	28	2.17	V
		0.00%	16.00%	1.33%	63.33%	18.66%		

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=Undecided, DA=Disagree, SDA= Strongly disagree

The above table no 7shows that the statement “I find difficulty in the trust issue to the farmers” was ranked first (I) in constraints in managing the farmers' problem followed by the statement “I find difficulty because the farmers do not follow the recommended advice” was ranked second (II), “I find difficulty because the farmer believes

more the neighbor rather than the Agri-input dealers” statement was ranked third (III) and the statement “I find difficulty because the farmers do not meet the Agri-input dealer on the right time for right recommendation” was ranked last (VI).

Table 7: Distribution of respondent as per their constraints in managing the farmers' problem. (n=150)

S. No.	Statements	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Mean	Rank
1	I find difficulty in the trust issue (trust to inputs) to the farmers.	7	60	10	59	14	2.82	I
		4.33%	40.00%	6.66%	39.33%	9.33%		
2	I find difficulty because the farmers do not follow the recommended advice.	2	38	15	83	12	2.57	II
		1.33%	25.33%	10.00%	55.33%	8.00%		
3	I find difficulty because the farmer believes more the neighbour rather than the Agri-input dealers.	4	34	8	101	3	2.47	III
		2.66%	22.66%	5.33%	67.33%	2.00%		
4	I find difficulty because farmers do not buy the branded products.	2	32	3	105	8	2.45	IV
		1.33%	21.33%	2.00%	70.00%	5.33%		
5	I find difficulty because most of the farmers are illiterate.	15	41	2	83	9	2.42	V
		10.00%	27.33%	1.33%	55.33%	6.00%		
6	I find difficulty because the farmers do not meet the Agri- input dealer on the right time for right recommendation.	14	38	4	79	15	2.36	VI
		9.33%	25.33%	2.66%	52.66%	10.00%		

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=Undecided, DA=Disagree, SDA= Strongly disagree

Table No. 8 shows the weighted mean and ranking of all the major constraints faced by Agri-input dealers. It is noted that financial constraints is ranked first (I) with weighted mean score 3.98. Sharma (2017) ^[16] highlighted the problem of untimely payment to input-dealers by farmers and Sanchez (2015) ^[15] depicted how limited access to credit undermines the effect of equitable input trade. Due to lack of finance, modern input has very less uses in the fields (Goletti and Govindan, 1995). Unfavorable input output prices, inadequate information, etc. are other factors responsible for low modernisation of farms. The constraints in product performance are ranked second (II) with

weighted mean score 3.95. Managerial constraints is ranked third (III) with weighted mean score 3.42 followed by constraints faced in delivery of extension services to the farmers with weighted mean score of 3.05. This may be due to medium level of knowledge of input-dealers Prajapati (2012) ^[14]. Constraints in managing the farmers' problem is ranked fifth (V) with weighted mean score 2.51 and constraints in availability of inputs is ranked last (VI) due to weighted mean score 2.33 among the all the constraints. Seasonality of agri-input trade is a major problem related to input-dealers.

Table 8: Major constraints faced by Agri-input dealers.

S. No.	Major Constraints	Mean	Rank
1	Financial constraints	3.98	I
2	Constraints in product performance	3.95	II
3	Bottlenecks of DAESI program during programme	3.91	III
4	Managerial constraints	3.42	IV
5	Constraints faced in delivery of extension services to the farmers	3.05	V
6	Constraints in managing the farmers' problem	2.51	VI
7	Constraints in availability of inputs	2.33	VII

Conclusion

Agricultural input dealers are identified as the most effective intermediaries within the pluralistic extension system for reaching farmers and delivering new technologies, vital inputs, and additional advisory services. The study is conclusive of the fact that financial challenges are the major setback faced by the local agri input dealers. Financial limitations were ranked as the most significant challenge among all others. The majority of input dealers are struggling with inadequate access to capital, primarily due to the reluctance or inefficiency of public sector banks in extending credit to small-scale input dealers. Poor product performance is another major issue, often leading to dissatisfaction among farmers. This affects the credibility of input dealers, even when they are not directly responsible for the product's failure. Dealers also face managerial difficulties, especially when farmers do not follow the recommended practices provided during extension services. This non-compliance leads to poor results and adds to the dealers' challenges. Other constraints include the seasonal nature of the agri-input trade, the untimely availability of inputs, challenges in delivering extension services to farmers, and difficulties in managing issues related to

farmers themselves.

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