

Knowledge on Government Policies and Programme Among Input Agents In Agriculture

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Abstract:Over the years, because of its valuable contribution to agricultural development, extension services became a public sector responsibility. The main objectives of the study that Knowledge on government policies and programmes. extension services play a key role in sharing agricultural knowledge, technologies, information and also linking the farmer to other sectors of the economy the extension service is one of the critical change agents required for the transformation of subsistence farming to modern and commercial agriculture. The present study is basically designed to analyse and study the Assessment of Extension Service by agricultural input. The investigator selected two districts in Tamil Nadu, namely Districts are Coimbatore, and Erode, in Coimbatore district Coimbatore and Erode district, sathayamangalam block was choose for the research. The findings of the study Ninety seven percent of agricultural input agents getting benefit through their works, As a input dealers they are financial benefit through their works (eighty percent) and getting development personal relationship(fifteen percent). Eighty seven percent stated that they were not aware of government schemes and policies; a meager percent (eight) stated the name of the schemes and policies. Fifty percent of agricultural input agents stated that government should provide loans for them to improve their business and followed by government should provide subsidy for all input (five percent). Only fifteen percent agricultural input agents was received awards .

Keywords: Inputagents, Inputdealers, Experince, Policies and schems

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I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, because of its valuable contribution to agricultural development, extension services became a public sector responsibility. Past investments in extension have yielded high economic rates of return and are seen as one reason for good global performance in food production (Alex et al., 2002).

Agriculture usually refers to human activities, although it is also observed in certain species of ant, termite and ambrosia beetle. To practice agriculture means to use natural resources to "produce commodities which maintain life, including food, fiber, forest products, horticultural crops, and their related services." (Muelle et al, 2005, State of Maine, 2013)

NASEP (2007) stated that the extension services play a key role in sharing agricultural knowledge, technologies, information and also linking the farmer to other sectors of the economy the extension service is one of the critical change agents required for the transformation of subsistence farming to modern and commercial agriculture.

According to Programme Commission (2008) extension in India has a mixed record. the literature rightly recognize its role in promoting productivity ,sustainable resource use and agricultural development (Singh). But public provision has overall fallen short of expectations, links between research extension and farmers are seen to be inadequate and un coordinated effort a bowed.

Suman, (2014) opined that agricultural extension in India has grown over last six decades. It is supported and funded by the national government—through its ministry of agriculture (moa) and other allied ministries. The share of agriculture in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has declined from over half at the time of independence to less than one fifth. Indian agriculture sector has an impressive long term record of taking the country out of serious food shortages despite rapid population increase, given its heavy reliance on the work of its pluralistic extension system. Venkates(2014) stated that the institutional change in input and service delivery is vital for the development of smallholder agriculture. During the past one decade or so, the government has taken a series of policy reforms for better availability of inputs by improving factor markets.

Anirban Mukherjee(2015) express that Private extension service can be successful even in resource poor areas provided appropriate technologies along with integrated extension service including marketing facilities are available. But the private agencies, when they have their own marketable agricultural inputs are desperate enough to convince the farmers so that they use only those products. The situation fools the farmers and compels them to be irrational in the choice of products such as fertilizers and chemicals as well as their use in non-judicious manner, so much so that it raises health hazards and environmental issues.

The Indian agriculture is at the crossroads today. Its strength to alleviate poverty and hunger is well-recognized, yet, the agricultural growth rate in the past 20 years has been visibly less impressive, and the productivity in the agricultural sector continues to be below compare to the international standards. While investments in research and extension have increased in recent years, their impact on smallholder farmers' livelihoods remains debatable. Even when these investments may address relevant problems of the farmers, the benefits of improved technologies will not fully accrue to the farmers. The yield gap between research stations and farmers' field remains high. For translating research results into tangible gains at farm-level, well-functioning agricultural extension and advisory services are required. (Babu et al,2013).

World Bank indicated that there are more than 1 million agricultural extension workers in developing countries, and public agencies have spent over \$10 billion dollars on public extension programs in the past five decades (Feder (2005)). The traditional extension model, "training, and visit" extension has been promoted by the World Bank throughout the developing world and is generally characterized by government-employed extension agents visiting farmers individually or in groups to demonstrate agricultural best practices (Anderson and Birner (2007)).

There are an estimated 282000 agri-input dealers in our country. They are pillars of their communities and have every interest to offer quality services. Farmers frequently receive advice from the input dealers of their respective locality (Ferroni and Zhou 2012)

Programme and policies for extension service and input agents:

In Asia, the agricultural input sector, including seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, feed and tools sold at retail shops, has been adversely affected by many factors. These include problems of under-supply, insufficient government support, poor infrastructure and distribution systems, limited credit access, bad repayment records, and lack of subsidies. In many cases the result has been an imbalanced use of fertilizers, improper handling and incorrect use of most inputs.(Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation,1998)

DAESI:

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) program" during the year 2003 with a course fee of Rs. 20, 000/- to the input dealers. Due to positive impact of the program, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Government of India has decided to implement this program for input dealers in all the states of the country.(National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management,2005)

MANAGE:

MANAGE has started a diploma course for private input providers. The diploma covers four modules: agronomy, extension and communication methods, individual and business development, and laws related to seeds, fertilizers, agro chemicals and consumer protection. A list of trained input dealers by district is available on the MANAGE website. The diploma course on agricultural extension for input dealers is imparted through distance education mode with the goal to qualify private, local agricultural input dealer to provide advice on local crop production and protection technologies (MANAGE, 2012; Ferroni et al. (2011)).

KVK:

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (farm science centre) are the institutionalized link between research and extension. They operate at district level and are funded by the ICAR, universities, NGOs and the state line department of agriculture. Their mandate includes promotion of locally adapted technologies through on-farm trials, demonstrations, and training. In 2015, 641 KVKs are operational throughout the country, and the number is expected to increase to 751 (Aesa: 2015)

Support private sector involvement in agricultural extension. Both the DASP and NATP initiatives emphasized the importance of private-sector involvement in the area of technology development and technology

dissemination. Recent government programmes also work towards more private sector participation. However, yet most of these government initiatives focus on public sector only. (Sulaiman: 2015)

In India, there are about 2.82 lakh practicing agri-input dealers, who are the prime source of farm information to the farming community. The first contact point for majority of farmers is the agri-input dealer. 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. The national institute of agriculture extension management (MANAGE) had designed a one-year diploma course titled ‘diploma in agricultural extension services for input dealers (DAESI)’, which imparts relevant and location-specific agricultural education to equip these input dealers with sufficient knowledge to transform them into Para-extension professionals so as to enable them to address the day-to-day problems being faced by the farmers at field level (Ministry Of Agriculture,2014).

ATMA:

Extension reforms was a major intervention in overhauling the extension system for making it farmer driven and farmer accountable through process and institutional reforms mechanism in the form of Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) at district level. It operationalises the extension reforms with focus on reforming public sector extension, decentralized decision making, farming systems approach, bottom-up planning, group approach in extension, promoting private sector, augmenting media & information technology, mainstreaming gender and capacity building of various stakeholders. Commitment to promote public-private partnership in agricultural extension management is demonstrated by reserving minimum 10 percent of the funds. Similarly, considering the need for gender concerns to be mainstreamed in agricultural extension, minimum 30% of resources on programs and activities are earmarked for women farmers. atma promotes an active participation of farmers / farmer groups, Ngos, KrishiVigyankendras, panchayati raj institutions and other stakeholders operating at district level and below. In addition to support to state extension programmes for extension reforms, the department of agriculture & cooperation (dac) has initiated number of schemes to revitalize the agricultural extension system in the 5 country, duly incorporating the elements needed for reforms. these schemes are mass media support to agricultural extension — utilizing infrastructure of Doordarshan and All India Radio; Kisan Call Centres — for providing agricultural information through toll free telephone lines; establishment of agri-clinics and agri-business centers by providing self-employment opportunities for professionally qualified agricultural graduates facilitating delivery of value added extension services and finally extension support to central institutions.(Working Group On Agricultural Extension Constituted,2007)

Private Para extension service providers should be integrated into the extension system including agri-preneurs under ACABC scheme (currently about 11000, 2000 added every year which takes the total to about 21000 by the end of 12th plan) and input dealers possessing diploma in agricultural extension services (DAESI) - about 12000 trained per year and 60000 by the end of 12th plan. (Government of India Planning Commission, Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-17) The farmers buy such inputs in their locality more often from private traders like input retailers than government agencies (Mitra, 1999).

Ogunlade et al,(2012)undertaken a research” Capacity Of Agro-Input Dealers In Advisory Service Delivery To Maize Farmers In Kwara State, Nigeria” agro-input dealers in advisory service delivery to maize crop farmers in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, it examined the personal characteristics of the agro-input dealers, determined the extension related activities of the dealers, and investigated the technical capacity of input dealers in maize production. This study was carried out in Kwara state, because of its prominence in the production of maize in Nigeria. A total of 50 agro-inputs dealers were sampled from ilorin, omu-aran and off a through snow ball technique. The dependent variable for the study was technical capacity of input dealers in maize production. They seldom advise farmers on use of equipments. There is a weak linkage with extension agents, research institute and credits institutions. They had high technical capacity in maize production. The regression model showed that level of education, membership, and level of business operation contributed 75% to agro-input dealers’ technical capacity. It was concluded that agro-input dealer perform extension activities. The study recommended that education and size of agro-input business be considered for effective programme development on advisory deliver by agro-input dealers. Agricultural commodities are produced in specific parts of the country depending upon topography and climatic conditions, while the demand for the same spreads across India. Hence, there is a need to move agricultural produce from specific supply centers to various consumption centers in the country in fastest possible way at the minimum cost in order to ensure supply of quality produce to consumers at affordable price. Under the present system, marketable surplus of one area moves out to consumption centers through a network of middlemen and traders and institutional agencies. Thus, there exists national level market though there is no national level regulation for the same. This has prevented development of an efficient and cost effective national market. In order to control price inflation at retail and effective control and regulation of the supply chain of sensitive commodities across the state boundary is essential. Marketing cost constitutes a major chunk of consumer’s price, which needs to be reduced.

Objectives: Assessing the Knowledge on government policies and programmes among agricultural input dealers.

II. METHODOLOGY

The present study is basically designed to analyse and study is basically design to assess the knowledge on programme and policy meant for agricultural input dealers. The investigator selected two districts in Tamil Nadu, namely Districts are Coimbatore, and Erode, in Coimbatore district Coimbatore and Erode district, sathayamangalam block was choose for the research. The total sample comprising of 40 agricultural input agents. A questionnaire is a sheet of paper containing questions relating to contain specific aspect, regarding which the researcher collects the data. Because of their flexibility the questionnaire methods is by far the most common instrument to collect primary data. The Researcher used questionnaire schedule to collect the data which contained socio-economic characteristic of agricultural input agents, benefit receive, knowledge on government scheme and policies, suggestion for improvement, details about awards. The questionnaire was given in by the investigator to the agricultural input agents. The agricultural input agents were oriented on the questionnaire to fill up the answers. After filling questionnaires the data was consolidated and discussed under the following headings:

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Socio economic characteristic of agricultural input dealers
2. Knowledge on government schemes and policy among input dealers
3. Benefit gained from Government
4. Suggestion for improvement of agricultural input dealers
5. Awards received by the agricultural input dealers

1. Socio economic characteristic of agricultural input dealers

Highest Proportion of study subject was in the age group of 40-49(twenty seven).Cent percent agricultural input agents was male. Education status of highest proportion of individual was graduate (Forty two percent), Fifty five percent of agricultural input agents belonging to nuclear family, forty percent of agricultural input agents have large family. Fifty two percent of agricultural input agents belonging to rural area. Whereas earlier occupation fifty five percent were private employees. Seven percent of agricultural input agents earning Rs 20,000 to 30,001, annual income, fifty percent of the input agents earning less than Rs 20,000,00. Sixty seven percent had wet land, Fifty seven percent under the category small farmers.

2. KNOWLEDGE ON GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND POLICY

The knowledge on Government schemes and policy of the agricultural input agents is given in table I.

TABLE I Knowledge On Government Schemes And Policy

Details		Frequency(N=40)	Percentage
Knowledge on government scheme and policy	Yes	5	13
	No	35	87
Name of the schemes and policy	a)ATMA	2	5
	b)DAESI	1	3
	c)Rural godown scheme	1	3
	d)Development /strengthening of agricultural marketing infrastructure grading and standardizatio		
	e)Nation agricultural insurance scheme	1	3
	f)National e-governance plan in agriculture		
	g)Others		
Getting opportunity from government	Yes	5	13
Types of opportunity	Financial	3	8
	Training		5

Eighty seven percent stated that they were not aware of government schemes and polices, a meager percent (eight) stated the name of the schemes and policies. Five percent of agricultural input agents had attended training programmeorganised by government.

3. BENEFIT GAINED FROM GOVERNMENT

The Table II explain about the benefits gained of the agricultural input agents.

TABLE III Benefit Gained

Benefits		Frequency(N=40)	Percentage
Getting benefit through input dealers work	Yes	39	97
	No	1	3
Types of benefit	Financial	9	22
	Development personal relationship	6	15
	Investment and innovation	5	12
	Importance on organic farming	8	20
	Diploma course	5	13
	Training	6	15

* Multiple responses

The table shows that ninety seven percent of agricultural input agents getting benefit through their works, As a input dealers they are getting financial benefit through their works(eighty percent) followed by getting development personal relationship(fifteen percent).

4. SUGGESTION FOR IMPROVEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL INPUT AGENTS

The Suggestion for improvement stated by the agricultural input agents is presented in the table III

TABLE III Suggestion For Improvement

Suggestion	Frequency	Percentage (N=40)
Government should provide loans	20	50
Government should provide free tablet	5	13
Government should conduct more training programme	8	20
Government should provide marketing complex with less rent	5	12
Government should provide subsidy for all input agents	2	5

Fifty percent of agricultural input agents stated that government should provide loans to improve their business and followed by government should provide subsidy for all input (five percent).

5. AWARDS RECEIVED BY THE AGRICULTURAL INPUT AGENTS

The Table-IV depicts the details about the awards received by the agricultural input agents.

TABLE IV Awards Received

Particular		Frequency(N=40)	Percentage
awards received regarding a input agents	Yes	6	15
	No	34	85
Name of the award	Award by Central Govt(Govt of India)Industrial performance award in 2001-2012	1	3
	Sakthi fertilizers corporation 15th Anniversary Excellence award(2013)	1	2
	Baired Crop Science(2005)	2	5
	Rich phytocare private limited	1	3
	Past 10 years No 1 Agro chemicals Distribution in Tamil Nadu(Seeds and chemicals)	1	2

It is clear from the table that only fifteen percent of agricultural inputagentswere received award. Five percent input agents stated the name of the awards is Baired crop science awards (2005).

IV. CONCLUSION

The extension services play a key role in sharing agricultural knowledge, technologies, information and also linking the farmer to other sectors of the economy the extension service is one of the critical change agents required for the transformation of subsistence farming to modern and commercial agriculture.

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