Original Research Article

Constraints faced by farmers in availing the extension services of Department of Agriculture

Abstract: The study examined the constraints of farmers in availing the extension services of Department of Agriculture in Haveri district of Karnataka state, during the year 2018-19 with a sample size of 210 farmers. With respect to constraints faced by farmers in availing the extension services of Department of Agriculture were grouped into five major categories. Findings of the study revealed that, regarding information services availed by farmers less than three fourth (71.90 %) of farmers expressed non availability of extension workers in office, followed by extension worker do not visit villages/field regularly(71.90 %). Regarding participating in extension activities services facilitated by RSK, nearly three fourth (73.33 %) of farmers expressed lack of time to participate in extension activities, followed by more than half (58.57 %) if farmers expressed the place of extension activity is not accessible. Regarding input services availed by farmers 70.00 per cent of farmers expressed non availability of required inputs (variety, chemical). Regarding constraints in availing diagnostic services more than three fourth (78.09 %) of farmers expressed RSKs are located away from the village. Regarding constraints in availing services of developmental activities 77.14 per cent of farmers expressed not constructing krishi-honda in-time, followed by more than three fifth (66.66 %) of farmers expressed lack of supply of drip & sprinkler irrigation sets to all category of farmers.

Key words: Department of agriculture, information services, diagnostic services, constraints.

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Introduction

Agriculture plays a vital role in India's economy, 54.60% of the total workforce is engaged in agriculture and allied sector activities. Previously it was 60% in 2001, urbanization, industrialization and raise in engagement in service sector may be the potential reasons to this decline (Census2011). Department of Agriculture has been created mainly to provide agricultural extension services to farmers and to transfer the latest technical knowledge to the farming

community, introduction of high yielding varieties, laying demonstrations, imparting training to farmers to improve skills & knowledge to boost up the agricultural production and productivity. Despite of these services farmers are facing the constraints which should be resolved for the welfare of farmers and to double their income as a result of this country's economy can also be boosted.

Looking back to history of department of agriculture in Karnataka, it is clear that agriculture development programmes were started in 18th century. Maharaja of Mysore initiated the agriculture development movement. Mark Cubbon established society for agriculture and horticulture in 1836. In 1885 state inspector general of police was given charge to four departments which include agriculture department. Dr A. Lehman was appointed as first agricultural chemist in the year 1899 to test soil samples and to provide important recommendations. In 1913 Dr. Leslee C Coleman was appointed as first director of agriculture (Anon., 2019).

Raitha Samparka Kendras (RSKs) were established at Hobli level as centres for Agricultural Extension, a total of 745 RSKs created initially under Raitha Mitra Yojane in 2000-01 (Avinash, T. S., 2013). These RSKs provide adequate services for farmers at grass root level. capacity of department is reflected by its staff strength. Staff are of two types one is technical staff who deal with technical problems while the other is para-technical staff who assist and implement the works of RSKs in addition with providing technical information. Agriculture Officer (AO) is the head of RSK with support of two Assistant Agricultural Officers (AAO) and Agricultural Assistants (AA). There will be one Agriculture Assistant (AA) for every Gram panchayat and the number of Agriculture Assistants increases as the number of Gram panchayat which comes under the jurisdiction of that particular RSK increases.

Materials and Methods

Haveri district of Karnataka state was purposively selected for study during the year 2018-19 as Haveri is one among the seven districts under the jurisdiction of University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad and Haveri is popular in agriculture, agriculture based

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enterprises and familiarity of the researcher with study area. Primarily all seven taluks of Haveri district were selected for the study. From each taluk, one Raita Samparka Kendra was selected randomly. Thus, totally seven RSKs were selected and from each selected RSK two villages were chosen randomly. Thus, the total number of 14 villages selected and from each selected village 15 farmers were selected randomly, making a total sample size of 210 farmers**.**

"Ex-post-facto" research design was employed in the investigation as the phenomenon has already occurred and this design was considered appropriate.A structured schedule was prepared with the help of judges in the field of Agricultural Extension and tentatively prepared schedule was pre-tested in a non-sample area against ambiguity if any, in the questions included there in and then necessary corrections were made in the final schedule.

The data was collected from respondents through personal interview method in an informal atmosphere by establishing a good rapport, convincing the purpose and importance of study. The collected data were scored, tabulated and analyzed by using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, correlation and regression.

Results and Discussion

It is evident from Table 1 that among constraints enlisted, less than three fourth (71.90 %) of the farmers expressed lack of availability of extension workers, followed by extension workers do not visit villages regularly (71.90 %) the reason may be due to inadequate staff (basic level workers) in Agriculture Department (Raitha Samparka Kendra's) and staff were busy as they must attend number of meetings every week (one video conference per week, zero budget natural farming meetings, progress report meetings, KVK meetings, review meetings, ADA meetings, bimonthly meetings) and Agriculture officers are the quality control inspectors who draw and test samples from input dealers. Followed by, lack of availability of information in-time (68.57 %) and lack of availability of required information (61.42 %). The reason may be because RSKs were located only in hobli/taluk place and there are less number of hoblies per taluk resulting in only 2-3 RSKs present per taluk, as a result distance between villages and RSK will be more so the flow of information services from RSKs to farmers was minimum. Further,

less than one third (30.47 %) of farmers expressed extension workers are not technically competent. The reason may be because of inadequate knowledge about extension activities in farmers and lack of knowledge and confidence in extension workers (Technology Promoters/ Facilitators) to solve wide spectrum of farmers problems as these facilitators were easily available source in RSKs for farmers and facilitators are educated upto SSLC, PUC and not graduated.

It is clear from Table 2 that nearly three fourth (73.33 %) of the farmers expressed lack of time to participate in extension activities, the reason because of heavy work load in the farm and less knowledge about the importance of these extension activities. Followed by, place of extension activity is not accessible (58.57 %) the probable reason may be because farmers must spend money and time on transportation, followed by lack of information about extension activities (57.14 %) the possible reason may be because of less awareness, less advertisement about the extension activities and poor interest of farmers in extension activities. Followed by, lack of interest in participation (29.04 %) is the other important constraint expressed by farmers in availing extension activities facilitated by RSK. The reason may be farmers expect the benefits (cash/free inputs) from extension services, hence usually farmers have ignorance about these extension activities and busy schedule of farmers may be also a potential reason to express this constraint.

It is obvious from Table 3 that less than three fourth (70.00 %) of the farmers expressed lack availability of required inputs, the reason may be because of less supply of inputs which were purchased by early visiting farmers making shortage for others and variety of demand in farmers mind but the supply of inputs was not up to the expectation as government must supply inputs all over the state which is practically tough to supply in required quantities. Followed by,no transparency in input supply (60.95 %) because most of the farmers say that they were unaware about the happenings in RSKs with respect to stock of inputs in RSK and various other aspects. Further 49.52 per cent of farmers expressed poor quality of inputs, followed by 37.14 per cent of farmers responded lack of availability of inputs in-time as the other important constraints in availing input services. The reason may be non-availability of inputs stock in

RSKs with respect to unpredicted rains, unexpected demand from farmers and untimely supply of inputs for RSKs.

It is clear from Table 4 that, majority (78.09 %) of farmers expressed that RSKs are located away from the village. Followed by, poor services with regard to water testing (73.80 %) as major constraints in availing diagnostic services. The reason behind these constraints is because of more distance between villages and RSKs due to less number of RSKs per taluk farmer needs to spend almost a whole day/half day to visit RSK and water samples were sent to water testing laboratories at KVKs. While, less than one fourth (24.76 %) of farmers expressed poor services with regard to soil testing as third constraint in availing diagnostic servicesbecause most of the farmers got benefitted by Soil Health Card scheme.

It is evident from Table 5 that, greater than three fourth (77.14 %) of the farmers expressed not constructing krishi-honda in-time, followed by lack of supply of drip & sprinkler irrigation sets to all categories of farmers (66.66 %) as the important constraints in availing services of developmental activities. The reason may be because most of the farmers applied for krishi-honda service but very few of them were got sanctioned, long procedures and paper works to be followed in availing these services and time lag between application and sanction of services was more. Further drip and sprinkler irrigation sets were distributed only for farmers who have irrigation source.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from the results that, it is necessary to increase the number of RSKs per taluk and recruit sufficient technical staff to handle the activities of RSKs **a**long with non-technical staff for distribution/sale of inputs to the farmers. Sufficient quantity and wide range of inputs must be supplied to RSKs and awareness should be created about the importance of these services and services should be provided at the level/place where farmers can attend very easily even in the busy schedule. The policy makers have to consider these points while framing the regulations.

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Table 1. Constraints faced by the farmers in availing information services

n=210

Sl. No	Particulars	f	%
1.	Lack of availability of extension workers in office	151	71.90
2.	Extension worker do not visit villages regularly	151	71.90
3.	Lack of availability of information in-time	144	68.57
4.	Lack of availability of required information	129	61.42
5.	Extension workers are not technically competent	64	30.47

Table 2. Constraints faced by the farmers in availing extension activities facilitated by RSK

n=210

Sl. No	Particulars	f	%
1.	Lack of time to participate in extension activities	154	73.33
2.	Place of extension activity is not accessible	123	58.57
3.	Lack of information about extension activities	120	57.14
4.	Lack of interest in participation	61	29.04

Table 3. Constraints faced by the farmers in availing input services

n=210

Sl. No	Particulars	f	%
1.	Lack of required inputs (variety, chemical)	147	70.00
2.	No transparency in input supply	128	60.95
3.	Poor quality of inputs	104	49.52

4.	Lack of availability of inputs in-time	78	37.14

Table 4. Constraints faced by the farmers in availing diagnostic services

n=210

Sl. No	Particulars	f	%
1.	RSKs are located away from the village	164	78.09
2.	Poor services with regard to water testing	155	73.80
3.	Poor services with regard to soil testing	52	24.76

Table 5. Constraints faced by the farmers in availing services of developmental activities

n=210

Sl. No	Particulars	f	%
1.	Not constructing krishi-honda in-time	162	77.14
2.	Lack of supply of drip & sprinkler irrigation sets to all category of farmers	140	66.66