

Impact of DAESI Program on Trained Input Dealers: a Perception Study

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Abstract

Most of the farmers in India seek farm advice from Input dealers. However, majority of these input dealers do not have technical knowledge on Agriculture. Hence, the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) launched an innovative program namely, “Diploma in Agricultural Extension Services for Input Dealers (DAESI)” to enhance the technical competency of input dealers. This program is conducted in 11 states. A Perception Study was conducted to analyze the impact of DAESI Program on trained input dealers, by taking 10 per cent of the sample randomly from all the 11 states. The significant findings of the study reveal that there is a positive trend of young people with higher qualifications joining DAESI Program; majority of them are small retailers or selling more than one category of agri inputs; most of the trained input dealers felt that topics covered in the class room, study material given to them and field visits organized were most relevant to them. The level of satisfaction with class room sessions and exposure visits was very good. Majority perceive that they have fully gained Knowledge and Skills on various aspects of agriculture, and gained confidence in technology dissemination, which are sufficient to give suitable advice to field level problems of farmers. Majority felt that their customer base and sale of inputs have increased and they have changed their approach in analyzing the field problems after DAESI Program.

Key words: Agricultural Extension, input dealers, field visits

Introduction

Public extension is one of the major extension systems. Besides this, other private players such as agribusiness companies, agripreneurs, NGOs, input dealers, etc., are also playing a major role in technology dissemination to the farmers. Among various players, input dealer is one of the important sources of information to the farmers. There are about 2.82 lakh input dealers in India (DAESI guidelines, 2014). However, most of these input dealers are not having technical qualification in

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Agriculture. Hence, the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) has launched a program titled “Diploma in Agricultural Extension Services for Input Dealers (DAESI)” to enhance the technical competency of input dealers with a view to facilitate better advisory to the farmers. Currently, this program is being implemented as a Central Sector Plan Scheme with the help of various Nodal Training Institutes (NTIs) such as Agricultural Colleges, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Farmers’ Training Centres, Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA), etc. The program is 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. As the program is being organised across 11 states of the country, it is felt necessary to learn about various aspects of DAESI with the following objectives.

Objectives

- To study the profile of input dealers trained under DAESI
- To understand the perception of trained input dealers about DAESI program
- To analyse the perceived impact of DAESI program on trained input dealers

Methodology

MANAGE has conducted DAESI program in 11 states during the year 2017-18 covering 2500 input dealers. A list of Nodal Training Institutes and details of State-wise and batch-wise trained input dealers during this period were collected from DAESI division of MANAGE. A sample of 10 per cent was selected randomly from all the 11 states and thus, a total of 250 trained input dealers constituted the respondents of the study. The data were collected by using a pre-tested interview schedule and the results were analysed using frequency, percentage and mean. A Paired t - test was used to compare the impact of DAESI program in terms of confidence gain, increase in customer base and volume of business.

Results and Discussion

Profile of Input Dealers

The selected socio-personal characteristics such as age, education, experience, type of dealership, type of agri-input sold, number of villages covered, information source of DAESI program, source of motivation to join DAESI program were analysed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of Input Dealers (N=250)

S. No.	Variable	Category	Number	Per cent
1.	Age	Young (<35 years)	75	30.00
		Middle (36-45 years)	92	36.8
		Old (> 45 years)	83	33.2
2.	Education	10 th Standard	44	17.6
		PUC (11-12) / Intermediate	57	22.8
		Graduate (Arts or Science)	105	42.0
		Post Graduate	33	13.2
		Any other (technical course)	11	4.4
3.	Experience	Low (0 - 4 years)	35	14.0
		Medium (5-21 years)	180	72.0
		High (22-48 years)	35	14.0
4.	Type of Dealership	Retailer	170	68
		Wholesaler	17	6.8
		Wholesaler & Retailer	63	25.2
5.	Type of Agri-input Sold	Seeds	4	1.6
		Fertilisers	22	8.8
		Pesticides	10	4.0
		More than one input	214	85.6
6.	Number of Villages Covered	1-10	96	38.4
		11-25	76	30.4
		26-50	51	20.4
		51-100	9	3.6
		101-500	14	5.6
		>500	4	1.6
7.	Number of Farmers Covered	1-100	18	7.2
		101-250	49	19.6
		251-500	64	25.6
		501-1000	46	18.4
		> 1000	73	29.2
8.	Information Source of DAESI program	Print media	13	5.2
		Electronic media	1	0.4
		MANAGE website	20	8.0
		Extension officers	146	58.4
		Trained input dealers	28	11.2
		Other sources / More than one source	42	16.8

9.	Source of Motivation to join DAESI program	To gain knowledge in Agriculture	64	25.6
		To obtain diploma certificate	16	6.4
		To become a para-extension worker to help farming community	48	19.2
		To have an efficient business	5	2.0
		Other sources / More than one source	117	46.8

Table-1 reveals that majority of the trained input dealers (66.8 per cent) belong to middle and young age category with the age group upto 45 years. As they are acquiring technical knowledge on Agriculture at a young age through DAESI program, it will help them to disseminate better advisory services to the farmers for a longer period. As per DAESI guidelines, the minimum educational requirement for enrolment is 10th standard. However, a majority of the respondents (42 per cent) are graduates and a considerable percentage of them are post graduates and a few of them are also possessing technical degrees. A significant number of input dealers (72 per cent) are having medium experience in agri-input trading. Higher qualifications with considerable years of experience in the field of agri-input trading of the respondents naturally would help them grasp the content covered in the program in a better way. The positive trend of young people with higher qualification joining DAESI program will facilitate quality information delivery to the farmers.

Majority of the input dealers (68 per cent) are retailers having small business entities and about 85.6 per cent of them are selling more than one category of agri-inputs either seeds / fertilisers or seeds / pesticides or a combination of all the agri-inputs. Majority of input dealers (38.4 per cent) are covering upto 10 villages and almost equal number of input dealers are covering 11 - 25 villages. A majority of input dealers (25.6 per cent) are covering 251-500 farmers.

Majority of input dealers (58 per cent) have expressed that they received information about DAESI program through the extension functionaries of Agriculture Department and also through input dealers trained (11.2 per cent) under DAESI program. This may be due to the fact that as per the DAESI guidelines, the input dealers are enrolled by the Department of Agriculture for DAESI program and they are also the license issuing agency and hence, the Department of Agriculture is naturally the major source of information to the input dealers about DAESI program.

Majority of input dealers (46.8 per cent) have perceived that more than one reason motivated them to enroll for the program. The reasons such as, joining DAESI program is an opportunity for them to gain knowledge in agriculture as they do not have any technical qualifications in agriculture; obtaining the diploma is a mandatory requirement for renewal of license, hence, business interest also motivated them to join; a considerable number of the input dealers (19.2 per cent) have felt that they can extend their technical knowledge to the farming community as para extension workers by enhancing their technical competency etc., were motivating factors for them to join the program.

Perception of Input Dealers about DAESI Program

Perception of trained input dealers on various perception items about DAESI program such as topics covered, study material, resource persons and facilitators, records and assignments, facilities and procedure adopted and perceived changes among trained input dealers were collected, analyzed and presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Perception of Input Dealers about DAESI Program (N=250)

Sl. No.	Perception Item	Category	Number	Per cent
1.	About Topics Covered and Study Material			
a	Relevance of the topics covered in classroom	Most Relevant	174	69.6
		Relevant	76	30.4
		Not relevant	0	0
b	Relevance of study material	Most relevant	166	66.4
		Relevant	84	33.6
		Not relevant	0	0
c	Relevance of the field visits conducted	Most relevant	199	79.6
		Relevant	51	20.4
		Not relevant	0	0
2.	About Resource Persons and Facilitators			
a.	Quality of resource persons in delivering the sessions	Very good	193	77.2
		Good	56	22.4
		Poor	1	0.4
b.	Quality of Facilitator in coordinating / conducting the program	Very good	213	85.2
		Good	37	14.8
		Poor	0	0

Sl. No.	Perception Item	Category	Number	Per cent
3.	About Level of Satisfaction of Classroom Sessions and Exposure Visits			
a.	Classroom sessions	Very good	200	80
		Satisfactory	50	20
		Not satisfactory	0	0
b.	Visit to research stations / SAUs	Very good	190	76
		Satisfactory	60	24
		Not satisfactory	0	0
c.	Visit to labs	Very good	171	68.4
		Satisfactory	78	31.2
		Not satisfactory	1	0.4
d.	Visit to Farmers' field	Very good	166	66.4
		Satisfactory	83	33.2
		Not satisfactory	1	0.4
e.	Demonstrations / Field trials/ Hands-on experience	Very good	164	65.6
		Satisfactory	83	33.2
		Not satisfactory	3	1.2
4.	About Records and Assignments			
a.	Problem-solution register	Very useful	183	73.2
		Useful	66	26.4
		Not useful	1	0.4
b.	Field visit register	Very useful	172	68.8
		Useful	78	31.2
		Not useful	0	0
c.	Record for sketches	Very useful	179	71.6
		Useful	67	26.8
		Not useful	4	1.6
d.	Assignment and presentation	Very useful	182	72.8
		Useful	67	26.8
		Not useful	1	0.4
5	About Facilities and Procedure Adopted			
a.	Maintenance of attendance and time management adopted	Most sufficient	233	93.2
		Sufficient	17	6.8
		Insufficient	0	0
b.	Facilities in the classroom	Most sufficient	215	86.0
		Sufficient	34	13.6
		Insufficient	1	0.4
	Assessment of program	Most sufficient	158	63.2
		Sufficient	91	36.4
		Insufficient	1	0.4

Sl. No.	Perception Item	Category	Number	Per cent
6. About Perceived Changes among Trained Input Dealers				
a.	Gained Knowledge and Skill in Crop Production Technologies	Fully	166	66.4
		Partially	77	30.8
		Not at all	7	2.8
b.	Gained knowledge and skill in pest and disease management	Fully	171	68.4
		Partially	75	30
		Not at all	4	1.6
c.	Gained knowledge and skill in soil health management	Fully	150	60
		Partially	93	37.2
		Not at all	7	2.8
d.	Gained knowledge and skill in water management	Fully	138	55.2
		Partially	107	42.8
		Not at all	5	2
e.	Gained knowledge and skill in farm machinery	Fully	127	50.8
		Partially	112	44.8
		Not at all	11	4.4
f.	Gained knowledge and skill in extension management	Fully	134	53.6
		Partially	109	43.6
		Not at all	7	2.8
g.	Change in orientation towards business ethics	Fully	128	51.2
		Partially	108	43.2
		Not at all	14	5.6
h.	Overall knowledge and skill gained in DAESI program is sufficient to give suitable advice to the field level problems of farmers	Fully	166	66.4
		Partially	78	31.2
		Not at all	4	1.6

Table 2 clearly shows that most of the input dealers who have undergone DAESI program have the feeling that the topics covered in the class room, study materials given to them and field visits organised are most relevant to them. This is mainly because MANAGE has launched DAESI in the year 2003 on a pilot basis and the curriculum has been fine-tuned over a period of time, based on the feedback from the input dealers, facilitators and various resource persons. The location-specific crops and problems are given more focus with the help of resource persons from the nearby agricultural colleges, research stations, KVKs, etc. Similarly, 85.2 per cent of the respondents have felt that the quality of facilitators in coordinating the program is very good. This might be due to the criteria adopted in selection of facilitators. All the facilitators are having graduation / post-graduation in agriculture, have rich field experience in organising training programs and possess adequate knowledge about agricultural activities of the district.

Similarly, the findings clearly show that the perception of respondents about the level of satisfaction of classroom sessions and exposure visits to research stations/ SAUs, labs, innovative farmer's fields and demonstration / field trails was very good. Most of the respondents have expressed that though they are in the business for many years they did not visit KVKs / Agricultural colleges, research stations within and outside the district. Eight field visits arranged during the program period have given an opportunity for them to get an exposure to various research organisations and their activities.

The respondents felt that the three Records such as Problem-Solution Register, Field Visit Register, Record for Sketches maintained by the input dealers during the program period and Presentation of Assignments were very useful. Out of three registers majority of the respondents felt that Problem - Solution Register was very useful. They indicated that they used to record all the queries / problems of farmers who had come to their shop and the remedies given by them in the Problem - Solution Register. The same was reviewed and discussed every week in the class room continuously during the program period. They felt that this process had helped them to improve their diagnostic ability and provide better control measures for the field problems of the farmers over a period of time.

Majority of the respondents felt that the facilities and procedure adopted in the program were most sufficient. This might be due to the fact that most of the activities of the program are being organised in Agricultural colleges, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and other agriculture related training institutes which are selected by the state level selection committee based on the availability of necessary training infrastructure such as class room facilities, audio-visual equipment, etc. In addition minimum 80 per cent of attendance, both in classroom sessions and field visits, was mandatory to appear for the final examination. The performance of candidates is assessed regularly through bi-monthly quizzes, mid-term and final exams, practical and viva-voce by the external examiner from the universities or research stations. Due to these reasons, the respondents might have felt that the facilities and procedure adopted in the program are most sufficient.

It is clear from Table 2 that majority of the respondents have a perception that they have fully gained knowledge and skill in crop production technologies, pest and disease management, soil health management, water management, farm machinery, extension management, change in orientation towards business ethics and overall knowledge and skills gained in DAESI program is sufficient to give suitable advice to the field level problems of farmers. The reasons expressed

for such results are that the program is spread over a period of one year, topics are covered holistically by experienced resource persons from the universities, research stations, KVKs, etc., each topic is covered every week in capsule form, review of problem-solution register, field record, record for sketches followed by concurrent evaluation of candidates through bi-monthly quizzes, mid-term and final exams which made them learn various aspects of agriculture fully. They have been exposed to both *kharif* and *rabi* crops. They have also expressed that as they are already in the business for many years and familiar with the field problems, they could relate the classroom learnings and learn quickly. They also opined that as the learnings were having immediate field application it had helped them to learn things better.

Perceived Impact of DAESI Program

Perceived impact of DAESI program in terms of confidence in technology dissemination, increase in customer base, volume of business were assessed and presented in the Table 3.

Table 3. Perceived Impact of Program (N=250)

S. No.	Category	Number	Per cent	
1. Confidence in Technology Dissemination after DAESI Program				
a.	Gained confidence in technology dissemination	250	100	
b.	Not gained confidence in technology dissemination	0	0	
2. Customer Base after DAESI Program				
a.	Increased	248	99.2	
b.	Not Increased	2	0.8	
2.1. Extent of Increase in Customer Base after DAESI program				
a.	Up to 10%	31	12.50	
b.	11-15%	51	20.56	
c.	16-25%	67	27.02	
d.	26-50%	49	19.76	
e.	More than 50%	50	20.16	
2.2. Change in Customer Base after DAESI Program				
S. No.	Category	Before DAESI	After DAESI	Per cent Change
a.	For advice	19.05	34.59	81.57
b.	For Purchase of Inputs	28.39	43.54	53.36
c.	Level of adoption of suggested recommendations in the field by the farmers	24.67	40.84	65.54
d.	Repeat customers for advice	26.90	43.62	62.16

Paired t-test : P < 0.001

Sl. No.	Category	Number	Percent
3. Sales Status			
a. Increased		246	98.8
b. Not increased		4	1.6
3.1 Extent of Increase in Sales / Volume of Business			
a. 1-20 %		132	53.66
b. 21-40 %		72	29.27
c. 41-60 %		29	11.79
d. 61-80 %		8	3.25
e. 81-100%		5	2.03

The results presented in the Table 3 indicate that cent per cent of the respondents felt that they had gained confidence in technology dissemination as they could gain sufficient knowledge in classroom sessions, practicals and exposure visits. They expressed that even if they were unable to diagnosis certain symptoms, they are now having the contact numbers of all the resource persons and facilitators who handled the classes and hence they would consult them and pass on suitable advice to the farmers.

A majority of the input dealers (99.2 per cent) felt that their customer base had increased after DAESI program due to their proper diagnosis of problems and appropriate suggestions for remedies. About 27 per cent of input dealers felt that their customer base had increased 16-25 per cent. One-fifths of the respondents expressed that their customer base had increased to more than 50 per cent. The customer base for seeking advice and for purchase of inputs had increased to 81.57 and 53 per cent, respectively, in the post-DAESI period. Repeat customers for advice also increased to 62 per cent. It is evident from the paired test value which is highly significant at 1 per cent.

The study also indicates that most of the respondents (98.8 per cent) have indicated that sale of inputs increased. More than half of the respondents (53.66 per cent) have expressed that the sale of inputs has increased 1-20 per cent in the post-DAESI period.

Status of Field Problem Analysis Approach after DAESI Program

The approach of input dealers in analyzing the field problem after DAESI program was assessed and presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Approach of Input Dealers in Analyzing Field Problem after DAESI Program (N=250)

S. No.	Category	Number	Per cent
1.	Changed	245	98.00
2.	Not changed	5	2.00

4.1 Change in Input Dealers' Field Problem Analysis Approach after DAESI program

S. No.	Category	Before DAESI		After DAESI	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	Before giving advice, I analyze the problem duly discussing with farmers about the symptoms, the previous practices / inputs applied	40	16.33	234	95.51
2.	I ask the farmers to bring specimens for diagnosis	42	17.14	234	95.51
3.	I consult the other trained input dealers before advising the farmers	56	22.86	214	87.34
4.	I consult the resource persons and facilitators before giving advice to the farmers	49	20	229	93.46
5.	I visit farmers' field to understand the actual problem and suggest remedies	44	17.95	235	95.9
6.	I refer relevant study material given in DAESI program	17	6.93	242	98.77
7.	I advise farmers to go for soil test and apply fertilisers as per the Soil Test Result	48	19.59	238	97.14
8.	I advise farmers to encourage beneficial insects in their fields	32	13.06	236	96.33
9.	I advise farmers on the importance of bio-fertilisers and bio-pesticides to ensure eco-friendly and quality produce to consumers	32	13.06	241	98.36
10.	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	50	20.41	238	97.14

Paired t-test : P < 0.001

The result indicated in Table 4 shows that 98 per cent of the respondents have changed their approach in analyzing the field problem after DAESI program. It is evident from the highly significant value of paired t-test at one per cent. Most of the respondents have expressed that they are not giving the insecticides or any other agri-inputs without proper analysis like they were doing prior to DAESI program. Instead, they have indicated that they discuss with the farmers to

understand the practices adopted by them, sometimes they ask the farmers to bring disease-affected specimens and visit farmer's field to observe the symptoms, if required. The trained dealers have formed WhatsApp group and hence, sometimes they share the symptoms through WhatsApp to get suggestions of the group members. They have also expressed that they have the contact numbers of all the resource persons who took classes throughout the program period. They used to contact the resource persons, in case they were unable to diagnosis the problems. They felt that they had realized the importance of their clients/farmers to sustain their business and hence, they used to advice the farmers to go for soil test and soil test based fertiliser application as well as bio-pesticides to ensure eco-friendly and quality produce to consumers. 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.

Need for Refresher Training Program

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 5.

Table 5. Need for Refresher Training Program and Areas of Training (N=250)

S. No.	Category	Number		Per cent			
a. Need for Refresher Training Program							
1.	Needed	215		86.00			
2.	Not needed	35		14.00			
b. Areas of Training Needs of Trained Input Dealers in Refresher Training Program							
S. No.	Areas of Training	Most needed		Needed		Not Needed	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	Agricultural inputs	101	46.97	91	42.33	23	10.70
2.	Pest and disease management	122	56.74	83	38.60	10	4.65
3.	Crop diversification	92	42.79	105	48.84	18	8.37
4.	Soil health management	106	49.30	96	44.65	13	6.04
5.	Irrigation / Water management	87	40.46	103	47.90	25	11.63
6.	Weed management	107	49.77	94	43.72	14	6.51
7.	Processing and value addition	79	36.75	104	48.37	32	14.88
8.	Marketing	89	41.40	104	48.37	22	10.23

9.	Bio-control agents / Bio-pesticides	113	52.56	88	40.93	14	6.51
10.	Precautions in handling, storing and use of antidotes in case of accidents	100	46.51	99	46.05	16	7.44
11.	Schemes and Programs	86	40	117	54.42	12	5.58
12.	Weather information	98	45.58	94	43.72	23	10.70
13.	Credit information	81	37.68	102	47.44	32	14.88
14.	Farm machinery / implements	87	40.47	116	53.95	12	5.58
15.	Consumer behaviour	94	43.72	86	40	35	16.28
16.	Record Keeping	104	48.37	96	44.65	15	6.98
17.	Computer application in file and business management	109	50.70	101	46.97	5	2.33

Table 5 clearly indicates that majority of the respondents (86 per cent) have expressed that they need Refresher Training program. They have realised the importance of regular trainings for updating their technical knowledge to sustain their business in future. Most of them are ready to pay for their training. Hence, the district level organisations such as KVKs, ATMA or state level organisations such as SAMETI can organise two to three day training program every year on recent advances in agriculture.

They have also indicated the most needed topics for refresher training program as Pest and Disease Management (56.74 per cent), Bio-Control Agents Bio-Pesticides (52.56 per cent), Computer Applications in File and Business Management (50.70 per cent), Weed Management (49.77 per cent), Soil Health Management (49.30 per cent), Record Keeping (48.37 per cent), Agricultural Inputs (46.97 per cent), Precautions in Handling, Storing and Use of Antidotes in Case of Accidents (46.51 per cent), Weather Information (45.58 per cent), etc. The training institutes may consider the above topics while organizing refresher trainings to meet the needs of input dealers.

Reasons for Farmer's Access to Input Dealers

The reasons why farmers are coming to the input dealers as their customers are analysed and presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Reasons for Farmer's Access to Input Dealers (N=250)

S. No.	Category	Number	Per cent
1.	Proximity	166	66.4
2.	Low price	194	77.6
3.	Easy accessibility	229	91.6
4.	Quality of input	238	95.2
5.	Timely availability	233	93.2
6.	Relevant and practical solution	240	96
7.	No alternative available	106	42.4
8.	Visiting field	216	86.4

The above Table indicates the reasons for farmer's approach / access to input dealers' shop. Ninety-six per cent of the respondents indicated that relevant and practical solution given by the dealers is the main reason for farmers' visit to their shop. Quality of input (95.2 per cent), timely availability (93.2 per cent), easy accessibility (91.6 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, analysed and presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Constraints Faced by Agro-input Dealers (N=250)

Sl. No.	Constraint	Number	Per cent
1.	Lack of capital	133	53.2
2.	Non-availability of bank loan	109	43.6
3.	Fluctuation of selling price of input due to seasonal demand	199	79.6
4.	High cost in transportation	193	77.2
5.	Lack of need-based training	168	67.2
6.	Inadequate knowledge in maintaining stock book and sales register of the product	155	62
7.	Lack of technical knowledge of the retailers about brands of product	137	54.8
8.	Delay in renewal of license	85	34

Table 7 shows that 79.6 per cent of the respondents felt that fluctuation of selling price of input due to seasonal demand is one of the main problems. As majority of the cultivable area is under rainfed condition with short crop duration of only 3-4 months, their business is only in the peak cropping season. In the remaining months only the irrigated farmers purchase inputs and hence, for about 8 - 9

months they have no good business in the off-season. High cost of transportation, lack of need-based training, etc., are some of the other problems of input dealers.

Suggestions for Improvement of DAESI Program

The suggestions of respondents for improvement of DAESI program with regard to duration, timings, number of field visits, study materials, methodology etc., were assessed and presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Suggestions to Improve DAESI Program (N=250)

Sl. No.	Suggestion	Category	Number	Per cent
1.	Duration of Program	Increase	72	28.8
		Decrease	23	9.2
		No change	155	62.0
2.	Timings of program	Increase	36	14.4
		Decrease	26	10.4
		No Change	188	75.2
3.	Interval of classes	Increase	31	12.4
		Decrease	32	12.8
		No change	187	74.8
4.	Number of sessions per day	Increase	45	18.0
		Decrease	19	7.6
		No change	186	74.4
5.	Number of practical classes	Increase	132	52.8
		Decrease	7	2.8
		No Change	111	44.4
6.	Number of field visits	Increase	140	56.0
		Decrease	6	2.4
		No change	104	41.6
7.	Study material	Require more	123	49.2
		Require less	29	11.6
		No change	98	39.2
8.	Methodology of program	Require change	48	19.2
		Slight change is required	66	26.4
		No change	136	54.4
9.	Content and curriculum/ syllabus	Require modification	46	18.4
		Slight modification is required	76	30.4
		No change	128	51.2

As per the above Table, majority of the respondents have clearly indicated that there is no change required in the existing program in the areas of duration and timings of the program, interval of classes, number of sessions per day, methodology of the program and content and curriculum/syllabus. However, 56 per cent of the respondents suggested increasing the number of field visits, 52.8 per cent of them suggested increasing the number of practical classes and 49.2 per cent of them felt some more study material is required.

Conclusion

As majority of the farmers rely upon input dealers for technical advice, enhancing technical competency of the input dealers would improve the quality of farm advisory services. The study reveals that DAESI program has helped the input dealers to gain confidence in technology dissemination. Hence, in the post-DAESI period also the input dealers should be 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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