

## A STUDY ON SATISFACTION LEVEL OF DISTRIBUTORS AND SERVICE ENGINEERS FOR DRIP IRRIGATION COMPANIES

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### ABSTRACT

The sale of a product ends with the sales transaction but it is the point where the marketing notion starts. The marketer should ensure whether the customer is satisfied with the company's product or not. Keeping this in mind the companies are giving more importance to customer satisfaction and every company is trying to satisfy and retain its customers.

This study has been done to find out the satisfaction levels of distributors and service engineers of drip irrigation companies about their marketing mix. It further involves understanding their expectations for the improvements in the products and services. Researchers have collected the information from the distributors and service engineers for interpreting the characteristics based on which the service engineers feel satisfied. The descriptive research method is adopted to conduct this research activity. Primary as well as secondary data collection methods are used. Census sampling method used with two different Questionnaires for Distributors and Service Engineers from Malegaon, Kalwan, Deola, Satana City. The study also helps in understanding the expectations and satisfaction level for a given region which can be further studied for other regions or similar Agri based product companies.

**Keywords:** Distributors, Drip, Engineers, irrigation, Service, Sprinklers

### Introduction

Drip or trickle irrigation is a kind of micro-irrigation system that helps to save water and nutrients in the soil by permitting water to drip slowly to the roots of plants, either from the upper soil surface or buried below the soil surface. Drip irrigation concept is widely used in the drought-prone rural areas in many countries in the world. The concept is used to increase the fertility of soil and increase the production of crops.

Agriculture has been forced to change as a result of the evolution of technology, along with industry, information technology, and the educational sector. As the largest segment of our economy, agriculture has embraced technological advancements to raise crop yields and improve crop quality. Due to technology, many businesses have concentrated on creating tools that could increase the effectiveness and productivity of farmland. One of them was the drip irrigation idea, which was attempted out by numerous businesses; while the majority of them succeeded, some others failed to find a market. The producer of drip irrigation products has a product range that meets all of the demands of farmers, but the success of these businesses is based on more than just the variety and quality of their offerings.

Here, two channels are crucial to the company's success and the happiness of farmers: distributors, who actually deal directly with farmers and sell the product, and service engineers, who work to identify issues, problems, and needs of end users and offer solutions for boosting productivity through wise water use. The contributions of the distributors and service engineers have an effect on the company's performance. The degree to which these two parameters are satisfactorily fulfilled is critical to the development of drip irrigation businesses.

This study was conducted at the rural areas of Nashik district in Maharashtra state, specifically the participants from Malegaon, Kalwan, Deola, and Satana cities have participated and were interviewed by the researchers.

The Researcher collected data to analyze the satisfaction level of distributors regarding different products of drip irrigation like sprinklers, Micro Sprinklers, pipes, drip lines (Inline/online) etc and service support to distributors

and Service engineers. The distributors and service engineers of drip irrigation firms operating in and around Nashik were the subject of an interview by the researcher using a structured questionnaire. The next phase of the research will examine how satisfied farmers are with the drip irrigation products and services provided by enterprises in the remote rural areas of the Nashik region. Understanding the requirements of farmers, distributors, and service engineers will enable manufacturers to concentrate on the functional application of technology.

#### Research Objectives:

- To assess the Distributors' satisfaction status about the marketing mix of the Drip irrigation companies.
- To identify the reasons for dissatisfaction, if any.
- To understand the Distributor's expectations regarding improvement in the products and services.
- To assess the Service Engineers' satisfaction status about the Drip Irrigation companies.

#### Literature Review:

Hu, Cheng, Chiu and Hong (2011), The emphasis on assessing consumer happiness in behavioural health services has increased as a consequence of providers' and researchers' desire to quantify results from the differing view of the patient. The findings demonstrated that one-dimensional and alluring qualities had an impact on customer happiness while objections from customers had the opposite effect. The barriers put in place to prevent patients from switching to a different provider may have contributed to the fact that customer loyalty turned out to be independent of customer happiness and complaints. Joshi (2016), the elements that make up consumer satisfaction with retail stores in Allahabad city as a result of their use of marketing as well as different kinds of promotional strategies. The most key component for a vendor and a successful businessman is customer satisfaction, which can only be positively influenced by effective marketing that encourages people to buy your products.

Chatterjee, Priya (2016), have identified the multispecialty facility as the venue for the research. They made an effort to ascertain the level of staff satisfaction at the chosen multispecialty hospital. Ali (2016), a popular and profitable business depends on positive reviews. The retailing sector, particularly in the grocery sector, has made focusing on client satisfaction a key objective. Additionally, it seeks to determine how much of an impact these factors have on total customer happiness in Malaysia, a developing market. Kahwaji and Mubayed (2015), from a behavioural viewpoint, the research investigates customer satisfaction dimensions and how they affect customers' loyalty to online shopping sites. The study sought to determine the extent to which online retailers owned satisfaction dimensions in the Arabic market, in addition to the function of those dimensions, which the researchers identified as service quality, perceived value, brand reputation, and trust, in enhancing and developing customer satisfaction to the point of loyalty. Out of all the satisfaction factors, trust was the most useful one. Customers will become more loyal as a result of the positive part that satisfaction dimensions play. Acharya, Dasani, Kirti (2019), the cornerstones of satisfaction are trust, duty, reliance, and retailer's desire. As per research, three of the four cornerstones have a serious influence on retailers' fulfilment towards FMCG item wholesalers, while the core (retailers' desire) has next to no impact on retailers' fulfilment towards FMCG product merchants. Mansouri, Unanoglu (2022) the distributor must capitalise on the company's assets and persuade both present and potential buyers. Kalaiamuthan (2014), it ought to be given priority to the credit period, advertising and promotion, and to some level, brand availability. Sakthivel, Devi (2014) stressed the significance of distributors in network marketing for the ongoing success of any company. Dominic (2010) High standards of service quality that acknowledge and meet client expectations help establish the company's services apart from those of its competitors.

#### Research Gap

These researchers have studied the satisfaction levels for different Industries but very few studies are related to irrigation industries. The researchers studied the satisfaction level of Distributors as they are the one who sell the products to farmers and the service engineers who actually are in direct touch with farmers. So to check whether earlier studies differ from this study in the irrigation and pipes industry, researchers have tried to study satisfaction levels of two different respondents in this study.

#### Research Methodology

Descriptive Research Design was used so that the players are accurately represented.

Primary data collected by way of questionnaires from Distributors and Service engineers to know the customer satisfaction of Drip Irrigation Companies in Nasik.

**Sampling:** Sixteen Distributors & twenty-two Service Engineers of drip irrigation companies in Nashik district are selected for the study. Researchers have used the Census Sampling Method for selecting the samples. Percentage analysis was used for analysing the data for both Distributors and Service Engineers.

**Limitations:** The Researchers have taken only a few questions and tables for this research paper as it was not possible to include many other details due to paucity of space and words.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation:**

1. For the Distributor’s satisfaction survey:

Parameters	Count	(%)
Highly-dissatisfied	0	0%
Dis-satisfied	0	0%
Cannot say anything	0	0%
Satisfied	4	29%
Highly-Satisfied	10	71%
Total-Count	14	100%

Table-No 1: Satisfaction level regarding the credit facilities provided.

Parameters	Count	(%)
Highly-dissatisfied	0	0%
Dis-satisfied	0	0%
Cannot say anything	2	13%
Satisfied	3	22%
Highly-Satisfied	9	65%
Total-Count	14	100%

Table-No. 2: Satisfaction levels regarding sales promotion schemes.

Parameters	Count	(%)
Highly-dissatisfied	0	0%
Dis-satisfied	0	0%
Cannot say anything	0	0%
Satisfied	5	35%
Highly-Satisfied	9	65%
Total-Count	14	100%

Table-No.3: Satisfaction level regarding transparency in billing and invoicing process.

Parameters	Count	(%)
Highly-dissatisfied	0	0%
Dis-satisfied	0	0%
Cannot say anything	0	0%
Satisfied	4	72%
Highly-Satisfied	10	28%
Total-Count	14	100%

Table-No.4: Satisfaction level regarding time taken for order processing.

Parameters	Count	(%)
Speedy expediting	10	71.42%
Improve Credit Facilities	2	14.28%
Use of Automation	2	14.28%
Total	14	100%

Table-No.5: Suggestions to improve the billing and invoicing process.

Parameters	Count	(%)
Order processing	2	13.30%
Shipping	8	53.30%
Inventory tracking	1	6.70%
Billing and credits	2	13.30%
Other Please specify	2	13.30%
Total	15	100%

Table-No.6: Administrative area presents the greatest opportunity for improvement.

2. For the Service Engineer's data analysis:

Parameters	Count	(%)
Extremely Satisfied	2	15.38%
Dissatisfied	0	0%
Can't Say	0	0%
Satisfied	9	69.23%
Extremely Satisfied	2	15.38%
Total	13	100%

Table-No.7: Satisfaction regarding reporting and record maintenance.

Parameters	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Extremely-Dissatisfied	3	23%
Dissatisfied	1	8%
Can't Say	5	38%
Satisfied	3	23%
Extremely-Satisfied	1	7.69%
Total	13	100%

Table-No.8: Satisfaction regarding the promotion policy of the companies for employees.

Parameters	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Extremely Dissatisfied	2	15.38%
Dissatisfied	4	30.76%
Can't Say	3	23.07%
Satisfied	3	23.07%
Extremely Satisfied	1	7.69%
Total	13	100%

Table-No.9: Satisfaction regarding Incentives given on target achievements.

Parameters	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Product training	9	56.30%
Travelling allowance	4	25%
Food allowances	0	0%
Incentive	1	6.30%
Van campaigning & Wall painting	1	6.30%
Person with full experience	1	6.30%
Total	16	100%

Table-No.10: Employees expectations from the drip irrigation companies for the excellent after-sales support.

#### Finding for Distributor's satisfaction about Drip Irrigation Companies

- The satisfaction level of Distributors about various parameters for most of the Drip Irrigation Companies products was high.
- 7.14% distributors suggested adding new products and 71.43% have suggested no need and 21.42% have suggested Rain Pipes to be added in the existing product lines.
- 100% distributors were satisfied with the billing and invoicing processes.

- 71.42% distributor's have suggested speedy expediting to improve the billing and invoicing process and 14.28% to improve credit facilities and again 14.28% for use of automation to improve the billing and invoicing process.
- It was noted that 1<sup>st</sup> rank was Jain irrigation and 2<sup>nd</sup> rank was Drip India, the 3<sup>rd</sup> rank was Netafin and the remaining companies were below 4<sup>th</sup>rank.
- It was found that around 35.71% felt no need and goodwill was 14.28% and 28.57% was advertisement regarding suggestions.
- Around 90% feel no need for advertisement and 10% say no regarding negative impact on business in recent years.
- It was found that, reasons to continue with the distributorship are 69.23% transparency and 7.69% was services provided just in time, then 15.38% Good service and 7.69% said no.
- Around 6.70% of distributors suggested improvement was advertisement and 20% said Goodwill, 40% said no need, 20% suggested for performance and 13% PVC Fitting line.

#### **Findings for Service Engineers satisfaction for the Drip Irrigation Companies**

- Researchers found that the number of years working in this field, less than two years was 6%, and 2-5 years was 31%, and then six to 10 years were 25% and more than 10 years was 38% .
- Around 70.60% Engineers demand was for inline drip, 11.76% online drip and for sprinkler it was 17.60% demand in the market.
- 100% respondents were aware about awareness camps for farmers and distributors.
- The satisfaction level of Service Engineers about various parameters for most of the Company's products was high.
- It was identified that the need for product training was 56.30% and travelling allowance was 25%, Incentives was 6.30% and van campaigning & Wall painting was 6.30% and Person with full experience was 6.30%. The additional expectation from the companies was to ensure excellent after-sales support.
- 35.3% Service Engineers were very satisfied, 52.9% were satisfied and 5.9% were neutral and 5.9% were very dissatisfied as for the overall satisfaction level.
- The rate issue compared with competition and transportation facilities was 16.7%.

#### **Conclusions**

- Assessing the Service Engineers satisfaction status: Almost all Service Engineers are satisfied with Companies with reference to various parameters. Still few of them were found to be slightly dissatisfied with respect to following parameters within the highly satisfied and satisfied category. Training, solving customer issues and maintaining a company record.
- Identify the reasons of dissatisfaction if any: The reasons for dissatisfaction were promotion policy of company employees, salary allowances and quality products, rate issues compared with competition and transportation facility etc.
- Assessing the distributor satisfaction status with the marketing mix: All Distributors are found to be satisfied with Irrigation Companies marketing mix elements, none of them was found dissatisfied with the measured parameters.
- Understanding the distributor's expectations regarding improvement in products and services: Majority of distributors expect advertisement, performance & PVC fitting lines.

#### **Suggestions**

- Drip Irrigation Companies should add more variety of PVC products in their marketing mix.
- More marketing activities should be conducted by companies like organizing camps, seminars, presentations and advertisements by conducting farmers meetings.
- Good Quality Products with low cost should be launched and should start an incentive structure for the Service Engineers for improving their performance.
- Sales promotion activities like newspaper advertising and local activities with Distributors. Advance travelling amount to be given if possible for better functioning of the sales person as ultimately the company will get better results.

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