

AN ASSESSMENT OF AFTER SALES SERVICES SYSTEM IN AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY MARKET

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Declining of the population engaged in agricultural operations has created labour scarcity. Agricultural mechanization is the best solution to this problem and its adoption and use depend on efficient and effective after sales services. This study evaluated the performance of after sales services systems operating in Sri Lanka, related to combined harvesters, combined threshers, two wheel and four wheel tractors. The primary data were collected from 5 agriculture machinery dealers, 50 machinery owners and 10 key informants, using a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Findings revealed that seven companies led the agriculture machinery industry in the country and offer after sales services such as field technical assistance, customer care and spare parts distribution. It was evident that, satisfaction of warranty period varied according to the machine type as explained by 92% of combined harvester owners being dissatisfied, whereas 80% of combined thresher owners were satisfied. Nevertheless, in general more than 60% of the machinery owners were satisfied with the usefulness of knowledge provided at installation and service quality of the personnel visited. However, 83% of the combined harvester owners were not satisfied with the free services and repairs due to poor punctuality. Assessment of customer care system revealed that, only 46% of owners had direct contact with the company to request repairs and free services. Result of the SWOT analysis discovered, success of the after sales services system is determined by the efficiency of the after sales supply chain, availability of the qualified technical staff and the maintenance of centralized customer information base. Study concludes that, combined harvester owners in particular, are mostly satisfied with the installation service but not with the free services, repairs and warranty period. Companies should give more attention in providing competent and timely field technical assistance and customer care services to meet customer needs and wants.

Keywords: After sales services, Agricultural machinery, Customer satisfaction