

An Assessment of Constraints Faced by Farmers in Accessing Custom Hiring Service Centre and Suggestions to Overcome Constraints Faced by Farmers

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ABSTRACT

Custom Hiring Service Centres (CHCs) play an important role in promoting farm mechanization by providing agricultural machinery to farmers on a rental basis, particularly benefiting small and marginal farmers. Despite their significance, farmers face several difficulties in accessing CHC services effectively. The present study was conducted to assess the constraints faced by farmers in accessing Custom Hiring Service Centre and to obtain suggestions for strengthening service delivery mechanisms. The study was carried out in Anand district of Gujarat state, where an operational CHC managed by AAPSU Cooperative is functioning. A total of 200 farmers were selected randomly from Anand, Borsad and Petlad talukas using an ex-post-facto research design. Data were collected through a pre-tested Gujarati interview schedule and analyzed using frequency, percentage and mean. The findings revealed that unavailability of crop-specific implements and machinery during peak season were major constraints, while establishing more CHCs and strengthening repair facilities were the major suggestions expressed by farmers.

Keywords: Custom Hiring Service Centres, farm mechanization and constraints.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays a vital role in India's economy by contributing to food security, employment generation and rural development. A large section of the population depends on agriculture and allied activities for livelihood. However, increasing population pressure, shrinking landholdings and rising cost of cultivation have created a need for improving agricultural productivity and operational efficiency. Since the expansion of cultivable land is limited, farm mechanization has become an important approach for increasing productivity and ensuring timely agricultural operations.

Farm mechanization helps farmers perform activities such as land preparation, sowing, irrigation, harvesting and threshing efficiently. Timely completion of farm operations is essential for obtaining better crop yield and profitability. In recent years, labour scarcity, increasing wage rates and declining availability of draught animals have increased the importance of agricultural machinery. However, the high cost of machinery ownership makes it difficult for small and marginal farmers to purchase modern farm equipment individually. To overcome this challenge, Custom Hiring Service Centre (CHCs) have

emerged as an important institutional mechanism for providing agricultural machinery to farmers on a rental basis. CHCs offer access to machinery such as tractors, rotavators, seed drills, harvesters and sprayers at affordable rates, enabling farmers to use modern equipment without heavy investment. These centres help farmers complete agricultural operations on time, reduce labour dependency and lower the cost of cultivation.

Despite their importance, farmers often face several constraints in accessing Custom Hiring Service Centre effectively. Problems such as inadequate availability of machinery during peak seasons, delays in service delivery, high hiring charges, transportation difficulties and lack of skilled operators affect the efficient utilization of CHCs. These constraints may reduce farmers' satisfaction and limit the benefits of mechanization. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the constraints faced by farmers in accessing Custom Hiring Service Centre and identify suitable suggestions for strengthening service delivery mechanisms. Understanding farmers' problems and recommendations can help policymakers and extension agencies improve the accessibility, efficiency and effectiveness of CHCs for sustainable agricultural development (NABARD, 2025).

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the constraints faced by farmers in accessing Custom Hiring Service Centre
- To obtain suggestions from farmers for strengthening the service delivery mechanisms of Custom Hiring Service Centre

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Anand district under the jurisdiction of Anand Agricultural University. Anand district was purposively selected as it has an operational Custom Hiring Service Centre (CHC) managed by the AAPSU Cooperative. The CHC operates in three talukas viz., Anand, Borsad and Petlad; therefore, these talukas were selected purposively for the study. Twenty villages were selected purposively based on the higher number of beneficiary farmers, comprising ten villages from Anand taluka and five villages each from Borsad and Petlad talukas. Farmers who had availed services from the AAPSU-run CHC were identified, and a total of 200 respondents were selected randomly from the beneficiary list for the study. The data were collected using a well-structured and pre-tested Gujarati interview schedule. The study focused on identifying constraints faced by farmers in accessing Custom Hiring Service Centres and obtaining their suggestions for strengthening service delivery mechanisms. An ex-post-facto research design was adopted for the study. Statistical tools such as frequency, percentage and mean were used for data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

CONSTRAINTS FACED BY FARMERS IN ACQUIRING CUSTOM HIRING SERVICES

Constraints faced by farmers in acquiring Custom Hiring Services refer to the difficulties or obstacles encountered by farmers while availing machinery and services from Custom Hiring Service Centres (CHCs). In order to ascertain these constraints, the farmers were directly asked to state the problems faced by them in acquiring custom hiring services. Based on the total number of responses, the frequency and percentage of each constraint were calculated. Further, ranks were assigned according to the magnitude of the responses and accordingly, the constraints faced by farmers in acquiring Custom Hiring Services are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Constraints faced by farmers in acquiring custom hiring services
n=200

Sr. No.	Constraints	Frequency	Per cent	Rank
1.	Unavailability of machinery during peak season	112	56.00	II
2.	Lack of awareness and inadequate information about CHC services	23	11.50	X
3.	Lack of timely availability of custom hiring services	57	28.50	V
4.	High and unaffordable hiring charges	79	39.50	III
5.	Shortage of skilled operators and technical manpower	70	35.00	IV
6.	Poor condition and frequent breakdown of machinery	39	19.50	VIII
7.	Long distance of CHCs from villages or fields	67	33.50	V
8.	Unavailability of crop-specific and specialized implements	125	62.50	I
9.	Delay in repair and maintenance of hired machinery	53	26.50	VII
10.	Partiality and unfavourable attitude of CHC management or service providers	29	14.50	IX

The data presented in Table 1 indicated that unavailability of crop-specific and specialized implements was the most serious constraint faced by farmers (62.50%) and ranked first, suggesting that the absence of suitable machinery for specific crops greatly hindered effective utilization of custom hiring services. Unavailability of machinery during peak season (56.00%) emerged as the second major constraint, reflecting intense demand-supply gaps during critical agricultural operations. High and unaffordable hiring charges (39.50%) ranked third, indicating that the cost factor significantly restricted farmers, especially small and marginal ones, from availing CHC services. The shortage of skilled operators and technical manpower (35.00%) was ranked fourth, pointing to difficulties in operating and managing hired machinery efficiently. Long distance of CHCs from villages or fields (33.50%) occupied the fifth rank, highlighting accessibility issues faced by farmers. Lack of timely availability of custom hiring services (28.50%) was ranked sixth, emphasizing delays in service delivery during crucial farm operations. Delay in repair and maintenance of hired machinery (26.50%) stood at the seventh rank, indicating operational inefficiencies in maintaining machinery. Poor condition and frequent breakdown of machinery (19.50%) ranked eighth, suggesting reliability issues of available equipment. Partiality and unfavourable attitude of CHC management or service providers (14.50%) and lack of awareness and inadequate information about CHC services (11.50%) were ranked ninth and tenth, respectively, indicating comparatively lower but noteworthy managerial and informational constraints. These results are in line with the findings of Das and Patil (2024) and Suresh et al. (2025).

SUGGESTIONS TO OVERCOME CONSTRAINTS FACED BY FARMERS

Suggestions to overcome the constraints faced by farmers in acquiring Custom Hiring Services refer to

the remedial measures proposed by the respondents to improve the effective functioning and accessibility of Custom Hiring Service Centres (CHCs). In order to collect these suggestions, the farmers were directly asked to state their views on the measures required to overcome the constraints encountered while availing custom hiring services. Based on the total responses, the frequency and percentage of each suggestion were calculated and ranks were assigned accordingly. The suggestions offered by farmers to overcome the constraints in acquiring Custom Hiring Services are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Suggestions to overcome constraints faced by the farmer
n=200

Sr. No.	Suggestions	Frequency	Per cent	Rank
1.	Establish more CHCs at village or cluster level to ensure timely availability of machinery.	131	65.50	I
2.	Provide crop-specific and specialized implements at CHCs, especially during peak seasons	97	48.50	II
3.	Reduce and rationalize hiring charges through subsidies and cooperative approaches	75	37.50	V
4.	Create awareness about CHC services through extension activities and mass media	44	22.00	VIII
5.	Ensure availability of trained operators and technical manpower at CHCs	79	39.50	IV
6.	Strengthen repair and maintenance facilities to avoid delays and breakdowns	82	41.00	III
7.	Improve accessibility by locating CHCs closer to farmers' fields or villages	67	33.50	VI
8.	Ensure transparent and fair service delivery to avoid partiality and discrimination	57	28.50	VII

The data presented in Table 2 clearly indicate that the foremost suggestion expressed by the farmers to overcome the constraints in acquiring custom hiring services was the establishment of more CHCs at village or cluster level, as reported by 65.50 per cent of the respondents and ranked first. This was followed by the suggestion to provide crop-specific and specialized implements at CHCs during peak seasons (48.50%, Rank II), highlighting the need for availability of appropriate machinery as per crop requirements. The strengthening of repair and maintenance facilities to avoid delays and frequent breakdowns was ranked third (41.00%), indicating farmers' concern regarding uninterrupted service delivery. Further, availability of trained operators and technical manpower was suggested by 39.50 per cent of the farmers and ranked fourth, emphasizing the importance of skilled human resources for efficient machinery operation. Reducing and rationalizing hiring charges through subsidies and cooperative approaches was ranked fifth (37.50%), reflecting the economic burden faced by farmers. Suggestions related to improving accessibility by locating CHCs closer to farmers' fields or villages (33.50%) and ensuring transparent and fair service delivery (28.50%) were ranked sixth and seventh, respectively. The

least emphasized suggestion was creating awareness about CHC services through extension activities and mass media, reported by 22.00 per cent of the respondents and ranked eighth.

These findings are in close conformity with the observations of Kisku (2020) and Das and Patil (2024).

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that farmers faced several constraints in accessing Custom Hiring Service Centre, which affected the effective utilization of farm mechanization services. Major constraints identified were unavailability of crop-specific machinery, inadequate availability of machinery during peak seasons and high hiring charges. Farmers also experienced issues related to shortage of skilled operators and accessibility of CHCs. To overcome these problems, respondents strongly suggested establishing more CHCs at village or cluster level, ensuring availability of specialized implements, strengthening repair and maintenance facilities and deploying trained operators. Therefore, strengthening service delivery mechanisms and improving accessibility of CHCs are essential for promoting effective and sustainable farm mechanization among farmers.

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