



# After-Sales Service and Dealer Support as Strategic Drivers of Market Competitiveness in the Water Pump Industry: A Conceptual Review

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## Abstract

The water pump industry plays a significant role in agriculture, irrigation, residential water supply, industrial operations, municipal water systems, wastewater management, and infrastructure development. With the increasing demand for efficient water management solutions and the presence of several competing brands, market competitiveness in the water pump industry is no longer determined only by product quality, price, or brand visibility. Customers and dealers increasingly evaluate pump brands based on after-sales service, spare parts availability, warranty support, technical responsiveness, service cost, and the reliability of manufacturer–dealer relationships. This paper presents a conceptual review of after-sales service and dealer support as strategic drivers of market competitiveness in the water pump industry. The study is based on secondary sources including peer-reviewed articles, systematic review literature, water pump market reports, and project-related conceptual themes. The review highlights that after-sales

service is not merely a post-purchase activity but a strategic capability that influences customer satisfaction, dealer confidence, brand preference, and long-term competitiveness. The paper proposes a conceptual framework linking after-sales service quality, serviceability, dealer support, customer satisfaction, and market competitiveness. It concludes that water pump manufacturers can achieve sustainable competitive advantage by strengthening spare parts distribution, improving service responsiveness, investing in dealer training, simplifying warranty support, and integrating serviceability into product and marketing strategy.

## Keywords

After-Sales Service; Dealer Support; Customer Satisfaction; Water Pump Industry



## 1. Introduction

The water pump industry is an important part of the engineering and manufacturing sector because pumps are widely used in agriculture, irrigation, domestic water supply, commercial buildings, industrial operations, municipal water systems, wastewater management, and infrastructure projects. In a country like India, where agriculture, urban development, water resource management, and industrial expansion continue to grow, the demand for reliable pumping solutions remains significant.

The Indian water pump market is driven by the increasing need for efficient water management systems, agricultural irrigation, and investments in municipal water and wastewater infrastructure. The market is also influenced by urbanization, industrial expansion, government-backed water infrastructure initiatives, and the adoption of energy-efficient and technologically advanced pumps.

At the same time, the water pump market has become highly competitive. Customers and dealers have several brand choices, and purchase decisions are influenced by product price, quality, durability, warranty, availability, energy efficiency, and service support. Market reports also indicate that price sensitivity, domestic and international competition, raw material cost fluctuations, and energy-efficiency requirements create continuous pressure on manufacturers. As a result, companies are increasingly investing in product differentiation, technological advancement, and after-sales services to strengthen their competitive position.

In such a competitive environment, after-sales service has become a crucial factor. Water pumps are durable and serviceable products. Their value does not end at the point of sale. They require installation support, maintenance, repairs, spare parts, technical assistance, and warranty handling throughout their usage life. Therefore, customers do not judge a pump brand only by its initial performance; they also judge it based on how effectively the company supports them after purchase.

Dealers also play a central role in this process. In the water pump industry, dealers act as the link between manufacturers and customers. They influence brand recommendation, provide product information, manage local customer relationships, coordinate service support, and handle complaints. When dealers receive strong support from manufacturers in the form of spare parts, warranty clarity, technical training, and quick service response, they are more likely to recommend and promote the brand confidently.

This paper therefore focuses on the role of after-sales service and dealer support as strategic drivers of market competitiveness in the water pump industry. It is linked conceptually to dealer decision-making and market competitiveness but does not use primary data analysis. Instead, it uses literature and industry sources to develop a review-based understanding of the topic.



## 2. Nature and Scope of the Paper

This paper is conceptual and review-based in nature. It uses secondary sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles, systematic review literature, market reports, and project-related conceptual themes. No primary data analysis, hypothesis testing, regression, correlation, or SPSS output is included in this paper.

The paper draws from literature on after-sales service, aftermarket support, product serviceability, service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, spare parts management, dealer support, manufacturer–dealer relationships, and water pump market competitiveness. Since water-pump-specific academic literature on after-sales service and dealer support is limited, the study also uses relevant literature from durable goods, manufacturing products, industrial equipment, automobiles, air conditioners, and supplier–dealer relationships. These concepts are then applied to the water pump industry.

## 3. Objectives of the Paper

- To examine the role of after-sales service in strengthening customer satisfaction and loyalty in serviceable products.
- To understand the importance of serviceability, spare parts availability, warranty support, technical responsiveness, and service cost in the water pump industry.
- To explore how dealer support and manufacturer–dealer relationships influence brand preference and market competitiveness.
- To develop a conceptual framework linking after-sales service, dealer support, customer satisfaction, brand preference, and market competitiveness.
- To suggest managerial implications for water pump manufacturers to improve competitiveness through service-based differentiation.

## 4. Review Methodology

This paper adopts a conceptual review approach. The review is based on selected secondary sources related to after-sales service, aftermarket support, serviceability, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, spare parts distribution, dealer support, manufacturer–dealer relationship quality, and water pump market trends.

The literature was reviewed thematically rather than statistically. The selected sources were grouped under major themes such as after-sales service, serviceability, customer satisfaction, dealer support, spare parts availability, and market competitiveness. A systematic review by Durugbo examined 249 peer-reviewed articles related to after-sales service and aftermarket support, which provides a strong academic foundation for this paper.

The paper also uses water pump market sources to understand the industry context and growth drivers. These sources are used mainly for the introduction and industry background, while peer-reviewed articles are used to support the conceptual and theoretical discussion.



## 5. Overview of the Water Pump Industry

The water pump industry serves multiple end-user segments such as agriculture and irrigation, residential users, commercial buildings, industrial operations, oil and gas, power, HVAC, chemical industries, water supply, and wastewater management. Pumps are essential for moving water and other fluids, making them critical for both rural and urban development.

In India, agriculture continues to be one of the strongest drivers of pump demand. Farmers require reliable pumping solutions for irrigation, water lifting, and efficient water usage. Increasing concern over water scarcity has also encouraged the use of advanced pumping technologies that improve water efficiency and crop productivity. At the same time, rapid urbanization and industrial growth have increased demand for pumps in municipal water supply, sanitation systems, wastewater treatment, and industrial processes.

The industry is also moving toward energy-efficient and technologically advanced pump solutions. Manufacturers are focusing on smart and sustainable pumping systems that reduce energy consumption and operational costs. This shift is important because customers are becoming more conscious of long-term ownership costs rather than only the purchase price.

Despite these opportunities, the industry faces strong competitive pressure. Price sensitivity remains a major concern, particularly in agricultural and residential segments. Customers often compare brands based on affordability, durability, service cost, spare parts availability, and local dealer support. Therefore, companies must compete not only through product innovation but also through service quality and dealer relationship strength.

## 6. Concept of After-Sales Service

After-sales service refers to the support provided by a manufacturer or seller after a product has been purchased. It includes installation support, repair, maintenance, warranty service, spare parts supply, technical assistance, complaint handling, customer care, and follow-up support.

After-sales service is especially important for durable products because customers continue to interact with the product and the brand long after the purchase. In the case of water pumps, the customer's experience depends on how well the pump performs over time and how effectively service support is provided when problems occur.

Durugbo defines after-sales service as activities carried out during the warranty period, including field technical assistance, spare parts distribution, customer care, and accessories support. The same review explains that aftermarket support involves a wider network of resources, including materials, people, and infrastructure, which support the continued use of products after purchase.

This understanding is highly relevant to the water pump industry. A pump brand cannot depend only on product sale. It must also create an effective service system involving manufacturers, dealers, technicians, service centres, spare parts suppliers, and customer support teams. When these elements work together, after-sales service becomes a strategic tool for improving customer satisfaction and strengthening competitiveness.



## 7. Product Serviceability and Customer Satisfaction

Product serviceability refers to the ease with which a product can be repaired, maintained, serviced, and supported after purchase. It is closely connected with after-sales service because even a high-quality product may create dissatisfaction if it is difficult to repair or if service support is weak.

Syahrial, Suzuki, and Schvaneveldt studied serviceability-oriented dimensions and found that serviceability affects after-sales service cost, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. Their study identified four important dimensions of serviceability: tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, and after-sales service cost. These dimensions positively influence customer satisfaction and loyalty in service and repair contexts.

Tangibles include service manuals, tools, spare parts, warranty documents, maintenance guides, and service facilities. Assurance refers to the knowledge, skills, and credibility of service personnel. Responsiveness refers to the speed and willingness of service providers to address customer needs. After-sales service cost refers to the cost involved in repairs, maintenance, and service support.

These dimensions are directly applicable to the water pump industry. Customers and dealers evaluate pump brands not only on product strength but also on how easily the product can be repaired, how quickly spare parts are available, how competent the technicians are, and how affordable the service cost is.

The serviceability literature also highlights that customers often do not separate the product from the service experience. In other words, customers view product satisfaction and after-sales service satisfaction as part of one integrated experience. This is important for water pump manufacturers because a technically strong product can still lose customer trust if after-sales service is poor.

## 8. Spare Parts Availability and Service Responsiveness

Spare parts availability is one of the most important elements of after-sales service in the water pump industry. Pumps are mechanical and electrical products that may require parts such as impellers, seals, bearings, capacitors, gaskets, motor components, control panels, cables, and other replacement items. If these parts are not available when required, the customer may face long downtime and dissatisfaction.

The serviceability literature identifies lack of spare parts, lack of documents, and lack of tools as major reasons for service failure. When service personnel do not have the required parts or technical information, repairs are delayed and the customer experience becomes negative.

In the water pump industry, downtime can have serious consequences. For a farmer, pump failure can affect irrigation and crop productivity. For a household, it can disrupt daily water supply. For an industrial customer, it can affect operations and production continuity. Therefore, spare parts availability is not merely an operational issue; it is a competitive factor.

Service responsiveness is equally important. Responsiveness refers to the speed and effectiveness with which service requests are handled. A quick response reduces customer frustration and improves trust in the brand. In



the water pump industry, manufacturers that provide fast complaint resolution, accessible service technicians, and reliable warranty handling can create a strong advantage over competitors.

## **9. After-Sales Service, Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty**

Customer satisfaction is influenced by the overall experience that customers receive before, during, and after the purchase. In durable products such as water pumps, after-sales service plays a major role because customers depend on the manufacturer and dealer for continued support.

The article on after-sales service and customer loyalty explains that after-sales service influences customer satisfaction and loyalty. It highlights that support after purchase, including warranty, spare parts, maintenance, repair, technical service, and complaint handling, can strengthen customer satisfaction and encourage long-term loyalty.

This relationship is highly relevant to the water pump industry. Customers are more likely to trust and recommend a brand when they receive timely installation support, proper service guidance, quick complaint handling, and affordable maintenance. A satisfied customer may continue using the same brand and may also influence others through positive word-of-mouth.

After-sales service also indirectly affects dealers. When customers are satisfied with service, dealers face fewer complaints and can recommend the brand with confidence. However, when service is delayed or warranty support is unclear, dealers may lose confidence in the brand and shift attention to competing products. Therefore, customer satisfaction and dealer satisfaction are closely connected in the water pump market.

## **10. Dealer Support and Manufacturer–Dealer Relationship**

Dealers are a critical part of the water pump distribution system. They connect manufacturers with customers, explain product features, provide brand recommendations, manage local market relationships, and often act as the first point of contact for customer complaints.

In a competitive market, dealer confidence can significantly influence brand performance. Dealers prefer brands that provide consistent stock availability, reasonable margins, promotional support, technical guidance, quick service response, transparent warranty settlement, and spare parts availability. If manufacturers fail to support dealers properly, dealers may become less willing to recommend the brand.

The literature on manufacturer–dealer relationships highlights the importance of trust and commitment. Manufacturer reputation, willingness to customize support for dealers, sharing of information, and length of relationship can influence dealer trust and relationship commitment.

The supplier–dealer relationship literature also emphasizes cooperation, dependence, power, conflict, and satisfaction as important elements in channel relationships. Strong cooperation can improve dealer satisfaction, while conflict and weak support can reduce channel effectiveness.



In the water pump industry, dealer support should therefore be treated as a strategic priority. Manufacturers must not view dealers only as sales intermediaries. Dealers should be treated as relationship partners who influence brand reach, customer trust, and market competitiveness.

## 11. Market Competitiveness through Service-Based Differentiation

Market competitiveness refers to the ability of a company or brand to attract customers, retain channel partners, respond to market changes, and sustain performance against competitors. In the water pump industry, competitiveness is influenced by product quality, price, distribution strength, brand reputation, energy efficiency, dealer relationships, and service support.

The Indian water pump market is price-sensitive and highly competitive. Manufacturers must balance affordability with innovation while responding to customer expectations for reliability and service. Market sources indicate that companies are increasingly investing in product differentiation, technological advancement, and after-sales services to strengthen their competitive positioning.

After-sales service provides an opportunity for service-based differentiation. When products are similar in price and technical features, companies can differentiate themselves through faster service response, easier warranty support, better spare parts availability, trained technicians, and stronger dealer support.

The serviceability literature also suggests that serviceability practices can help firms benchmark competitors and pursue servitization as a strategy for differentiation and profitability. This means that after-sales service is not only a customer support function but also a strategic competitive tool.

For water pump manufacturers, service-based differentiation may include the following:

- Clear warranty communication
- Fast complaint response
- Dealer-level spare parts availability
- Technician training
- Service centre development
- Preventive maintenance support
- Digital complaint tracking
- Customer education manuals
- Dealer service helplines
- Product designs that are easier to repair and maintain

These practices can reduce customer uncertainty, improve dealer confidence, and strengthen brand preference.



## 12. Proposed Conceptual Framework

The review of literature supports a conceptual framework in which after-sales service and dealer support jointly influence customer satisfaction, dealer confidence, brand preference, and market competitiveness.

### Conceptual Framework

#### **After-Sales Service Quality**

Installation support, maintenance support, warranty handling, technical assistance, complaint management, and service responsiveness



#### **Serviceability and Spare Parts Support**

Ease of repair, spare parts availability, service manuals, skilled technicians, service centres, and affordable maintenance cost



#### **Dealer Support and Relationship Quality**

Manufacturer trust, dealer communication, stock support, technical training, promotional assistance, and warranty clarity



#### **Customer Satisfaction and Dealer Confidence**

Reduced complaints, stronger trust, better service experience, and improved dealer recommendation



#### **Brand Preference and Market Competitiveness**

Customer loyalty, repeat purchase, positive word-of-mouth, dealer preference, and stronger competitive position

This framework suggests that after-sales service and dealer support should not be treated separately. They operate together. Strong service support improves customer satisfaction, while strong dealer support improves dealer confidence. Together, they strengthen brand preference and market competitiveness



### 13. Discussion

The review clearly indicates that after-sales service has strategic importance in the water pump industry. Water pumps are serviceable products, and customers evaluate them throughout their ownership period. Therefore, the relationship between the customer and the brand continues after the sale.

The literature shows that after-sales service includes technical assistance, spare parts distribution, customer care, warranty support, and maintenance. These elements are highly relevant to water pumps because they require installation, regular usage support, repair, and replacement parts.

Serviceability is also a major factor. A product that is easy to repair, supported by proper manuals, and backed by trained service personnel creates a better customer experience. When service cost is reasonable and spare parts are available, customers are more likely to remain satisfied.

The role of dealers is equally important. Dealers influence customer purchase decisions and often handle service-related communication. A dealer who receives proper support from the manufacturer can promote the brand confidently. On the other hand, weak service support can reduce dealer trust and affect brand recommendation.

Therefore, after-sales service and dealer support must be integrated into the competitive strategy of water pump manufacturers. Companies should not treat service as an expense alone. Instead, they should treat it as a long-term investment in customer loyalty, dealer confidence, and brand strength.

### 14. Managerial Implications

The findings of this conceptual review provide several practical implications for water pump manufacturers.

First, manufacturers should build a structured after-sales service system. Customers and dealers should clearly know how to access installation support, complaint registration, warranty claims, technical assistance, and repair services.

Second, spare parts availability should be improved. Manufacturers should maintain adequate spare parts inventory at dealer points, service centres, and regional warehouses. This can reduce downtime and improve customer satisfaction.

Third, dealer training should be strengthened. Dealers should be trained on product features, technical basics, warranty procedures, complaint handling, service escalation, and maintenance guidance.

Fourth, companies should improve service responsiveness. Faster complaint response, service ticket tracking, technician allocation, and follow-up communication can improve customer trust.

Fifth, warranty support should be simplified. A transparent and quick warranty claim process can improve both customer satisfaction and dealer confidence.

Sixth, serviceability should be considered during product design. Pumps should be designed in a way that allows easier repair, convenient part replacement, and lower maintenance cost.



Seventh, manufacturers should communicate service benefits as part of brand positioning. Customers should be made aware of spare parts availability, service centres, warranty support, trained technicians, and maintenance services.

Finally, manufacturer–dealer relationships should be strengthened through trust, communication, fair schemes, technical support, and regular feedback collection. A confident dealer becomes a strong brand advocate in the local market.

## 15. Theoretical Contribution

This paper contributes conceptually by connecting after-sales service, serviceability, dealer support, customer satisfaction, and market competitiveness in the context of the water pump industry. Existing literature often discusses after-sales service in automobiles, appliances, industrial equipment, manufacturing, and other durable goods. This paper applies those concepts to the water pump industry, where dealer networks and service support are highly important but less explored academically.

The proposed framework extends the understanding of competitiveness by showing that market strength is not created only through product quality and price. It is also shaped by service support, spare parts availability, dealer trust, technical responsiveness, and customer satisfaction.

## 16. Limitations and Scope for Future Research

This paper is conceptual and review-based. It does not include primary data collection or statistical analysis. Therefore, the proposed framework should be empirically tested in future studies.

Future researchers can conduct surveys among water pump dealers to examine how after-sales service, spare parts availability, warranty support, technical training, and manufacturer communication influence dealer satisfaction and brand recommendation. Customer-based studies can also be conducted to understand how service responsiveness, maintenance cost, and warranty handling influence customer loyalty.

Future studies may also compare rural and urban markets, agricultural and industrial pump users, or different pump brands to understand how service support influences competitiveness across market segments.

## 17. Conclusion

The water pump industry is becoming increasingly competitive due to rising demand, technological change, infrastructure development, and the presence of multiple brands. In this environment, after-sales service and dealer support have become important drivers of market competitiveness.

The review shows that customers evaluate water pump brands not only by product quality and price but also by service experience. Serviceability factors such as spare parts availability, service responsiveness, skilled technicians, warranty support, and affordable maintenance cost influence customer satisfaction and loyalty. Dealers also play a major role because they shape customer recommendations and act as the first point of contact for service-related issues.



Therefore, water pump manufacturers should treat after-sales service and dealer support as strategic capabilities. Companies that provide reliable products, quick service response, accessible spare parts, transparent warranty support, and strong dealer relationships can build customer trust and market competitiveness. In the long run, service-based differentiation can help water pump brands compete beyond price and create sustainable dealer and customer loyalty.

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