

UTILIZATION OF INFORMATION SOURCES BY THE FARMERS

Vikram Singh¹, I. M. Khan² and A. K. Sah³

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted in Rajasthan state to assess the utilization of information sources and channels by the farmers for obtaining information on different package of practices. The results obtained under present study are eye opener for Government departments and agencies as they were least preferred by the farmers. The private agencies were playing important role in the process of information dissemination supported by the constructive role of electronic and print media as preferred channels of information dissemination. Concerned Govt. Departments must try to incorporate innovations in the way to provide information to the farmers through use of different sources under their jurisdiction.

Key words: Information source; Information channel; Package of practice

INTRODUCTION

The transfer of agricultural innovations from research stations to farmers are aimed at making perceptible changes in rural India. The process of communication is prerequisite to overcome ignorance, poverty in order to attain economic and social well being. In fact information is not only a resource but it is also a catalytic factor that motivates people to take right decision at the right time, which ultimately result in increasing the production capacity of the farming community at large.

Farmer needs information regarding various aspects of agriculture and allied enterprises to optimize yield and profit. Besides several social, personal, economic and environmental constraints, factors like lack of conviction in the message dissemination, poor flow of message through channels and receipt of messages through less preferred sources and channels can also result in poor adoption of farming practices. At the same time farmers may have the option to choose from variety of information sources and channels according to their preference, need and resource availability. Hence, it is essential to know the sources and channels preferred by farmers for effective dissemination of information and better adoption of farming practices. Keeping these in view a study was carried out to find out the extent of utilization of different information sources and channels by the farmers in Rajasthan.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in purposively selected Piprali Panchayat Samiti of Sikar district in Rajasthan because the farmers were having highest contact to development departments. From Piprali Panchayat Samiti five Gram Panchayats were selected randomly. In the next stage of sampling, ten villages, two each from five Gram Panchayats were selected randomly, and a sample of 100 respondents was selected under proportionate random sampling procedure. The data were collected with the help of deliberately developed

interview schedule in personal interview mode. To measure the extent of utilization of sources and channels of information used by farmers for different package of practices a scale was developed by following systematic procedures in scale development. By implementing scale, farmers were assessed in use of sources and channels for obtaining information about improved seed, seed treatment, insecticide and pesticide and fertilizer use.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The extent of utilization of different sources and channels of information were assessed and reported on the basis of frequency and percentage of farmers using them.

Use of Information Sources : A critical examination of data presented in the Table 1 reveals that for obtaining information on improved seed variety, private agencies as a source of information was ranked first and used by 19.46 per cent of farmers followed by 18.97 per cent of respondents preferring neighbours as source of information for the same. The friends furnished the same information to 13.13 per cent of farmers followed by agriculture supervisors (11.67%), research station scientists (6.08%), Assistant Agricultural Officers (AAOs) (3.89%), agriculture graduates (2.91%), Agricultural Officers (AOs) (1.70%) and NGOs (1.45%). It is heartening to know that a meagre percentage of farmers (1.21%) got information regarding improved seed from Agricultural Technology Information Centre (ATIC).

Regarding the seed treatment practices private agencies were ranked first as a source of information, which was used by 20.84 per cent of farmers while 15.63 per cent of them approached friends for the same. The neighbours also played major role who furnished the same information to 14.65 per cent of farmers, followed by progressive farmers (11.72%), agriculture supervisors (9.77%), research stations (7.16%), relatives (6.51%), agriculture graduates (2.60%) and AOs

1. Ph.D. Scholar, Dairy Extension Division, NDRI, Karnal (Haryana)

2. Asstt. Professor, SKN-COA, Jobner, Jaipur (Raj)

3. Scientist (Sr. Scale), Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research, Lucknow (UP)

(1.95%). Only 1.30 percent farmers obtain information from NGOs and ATIC each, which is disappointing because farmers are almost ignorant about the potentiality of these two agencies as source of information on aspect related to seed treatment practices.

Table 1. Utilization of different sources of information about individual farm practices N = 100 (Multiple response)

S. No.	Sources of information	Improved seed		Seed treatment		Insecticides & Pesticides		Fertilizer use	
		P	R	P	R	P	R	P	R
1	A.O.	1.70	IX	6	IX	2.61	X	2.49	X
2	A.A.O.	3.89	VII	20	VII	4.94	VIII	4.98	VIII
3	Agriculture Supervisor	11.67	IV	30	V	11.62	V	8.86	V
4	Friends	13.13	III	48	II	12.79	III	13.29	III
5	Neighbours	18.97	II	45	III	15.11	II	16.62	II
6	Private agencies	19.46	I	64	I	19.18	I	20.77	I
7	Progressive farmers	11.67	IV	36	IV	12.20	IV	12.46	IV
8	Relatives	7.78	V	20	VII	6.39	VII	6.64	VII
9	Research stations	6.08	VI	22	VI	7.84	VI	8.31	VI
10	NGOs graduates	1.45	X	4	X	1.74	XI	1.38	XI
11	Agriculture	2.91	VIII	8	VII	4.06	IX	2.77	IX
12	ATIC	1.21	XI	4	X	1.45	XII	1.38	XI

P = Percentage; R = Rank

From Table 1 it is evident that 19.18 per cent farmers used private agencies as source regarding the information on practices related to insecticide and pesticide. Subsequently, they used the source-neighbours and friends comparatively with lesser frequencies i.e. 15.11 per cent and 12.79 per cent, respectively followed by progressive farmers (12.20%), agricultural supervisors (11.62%), research stations (7.84%), relatives 6.39%, AAOs (4.94%), agricultural graduates (4.06%), AOs (2.61%) and NGOs (1.74%). Only 1.45 per cent farmers got information from ATIC on insecticides and pesticides practices.

As far as the information on fertilizer use is concerned private agencies were used by 20.77 percent of farmers followed by neighbours (16.62%) and friends (13.29%) The other sources like progressive farmers (12.46%), agriculture supervisors (8.86%), research stations (8.31%), relatives (6.64%), AAOs (4.98%), agricultural graduates (2.77%) and AOs (2.49%) were also used by the farmers in given rank order. Only 1.38 percent farmers use/contact ATIC and NGOs each as source for obtaining information related to fertilizer use.

The private agencies were found to be most utilized source of information in all four package of practices. The valid reasons behind it was their presence in study area at large, easy accessibility to the farmers and availability of information as and when needed by the farmers. The neighbours and friends were ranked at second and third, respectively as source for getting information about farm package of practices might be due to closeness to the farmers who believe in the

information furnished by them and also perceived reliable. The similar findings were reported by Goswami, *et.al* (2001).

On the other hand the agricultural supervisors, relatives, research stations, progressive farmers, AAOs, agricultural graduates, AOs, NGOs and ATIC also provided information to farmers but very few utilize them as source of information. These agencies are not utilized frequently, which shows the farmers ignorance about them. At the same time these agencies may not able to provide right information at right time to the farmers.

Table 2. Utilization of different channels of information about individual farm practices N = 100 (Multiple response)

S. No.	Channels of information	Improved seed		Seed treatment		Insecticides & Pesticides		Fertilizer use	
		P	R	P	R	P	R	P	R
1	T.V.	10.02	V	13.29	II	14.92	I	14.32	I
2	Radio	4.01	VIII	9.66	V	6.46	V	5.50	VII
3	News papers	15.03	II	10.57	IV	9.95	III	11.01	IV
4	Literature	8.02	VII	9.06	VI	9.45	IV	6.61	VI
5	Kisan Mela	8.52	VI	9.06	VI	9.45	IV	7.16	V
6	Farmer's training	10.52	IV	9.06	VI	9.95	III	13.22	III
7	Group discussion	16.04	I	14.50	I	14.92	I	14.32	I
8	Group meetings	14.03	III	10.87	III	11.94	II	13.77	II
9	Poster/ Charts/ Circulars	3.00	X	3.02	VIII	1.99	VIII	3.03	X
10	Field day IX	4.01	X	3.02	VIII	4.97	VI	3.80	
11	Result and Method demonstration	3.75	VIII	4.83	VII	2.98	VII	3.30	IX
12	Exhibition	3.99	IX	3.02	VIII	2.98	VII	4.40	VIII

P = Percentage; R = Rank

Use of Information Channels : The figures in Table 2 reveals the findings related to the farmers use of different channels of information about farm package of practices. The table shows that for information on improved seed, group discussion was used by 16.04 percent of farmers as a channel of information. 15.03 percent of farmers used newspaper, 14.03 percent farmers used group meetings for the same, which is a good indication for media/journalists to disseminate information related to improved seed among large number of farmers by publishing relevant article in newspapers. Very less number of farmers (i.e. 3.0%) were utilizing posters/ charts/ circulars, field day/ field visit, result & method demonstration and exhibition as information channels to obtain information related to improved seed.

Regarding the seed treatment group discussion as a channel of information was used by 14.50 percent of farmers while 13.29 percent farmers used television for the same purpose, followed by group meetings (10.87%), newspapers (10.57%) and radio (9.66%). The literature, kisan mela and

farmer's training were used by about 9 per cent of farmers followed by result and method demonstrations which was used by 4.83 percent farmers. Only 3.02 per cent farmers used posters/charts/circulars, field day/field visit and exhibition each as information channels.

For gaining the information about insecticides and pesticides, farmers give priority to television and group discussion as channels with 14.92 per cent and 11.94 per cent farmers using them respectively. The other important channels used by farmers were found to be group meeting, newspapers, literature, kisan mela, farmer's training and radio in their mentioned rank order.

Similarly about fertilizer use television and group discussion as channels of information were used by maximum number of farmers i.e. 14.32 per cent each, where as group meetings and farmers training were used by 13.77 per cent and 13.22 percent of the farmer, respectively for the same purpose.

Group discussion was used by farmers with maximum priority as it is regularly used by them for all selected farm package of practices viz. improved seed, seed treatment, insecticide and pesticide and fertilizer use. It might also be due to reasons that the psychological need of group belongingness motivate the farmers for discussing new information or innovation or problem with the group. The maximum use of television for getting information about insecticide and pesticides and fertilizer use might be due to

possession of television by most of the farmers which provide access to many useful programmes e.g. Chaupal, Krishi Darshan, Ankur etc. telecast by Doordarshan with useful information in the conceivable and acceptable form for the farmers. The similar findings were also reported by Raj *et.al* (1992).

CONCLUSION

The findings reported under present study was sufficient impetus to know the farmers preferences with regard to utilization of different information sources and channels while obtaining information on different aspects of farming practices, specially in the Rajasthan State. The private agencies found their "Place of Pride" by attracting large number of farmers for information gathering and sharing. Television as a mass media was most preferred channel at the same time "Group Meetings" was also considered as an important channel by the farmers. The performance of Government agencies were found to be dismal in serving as source of information whereas, the demonstration and exhibition were found to be least utilized channels for disseminating information among farmers. These findings may be utilized by planners and implementing agencies in the field of agriculture for quick dissemination of farm information considering the practical reliability of different sources and channels available for information dissemination in the study areas.

REFERENCES

1. Goswami, A., Ray, N., Mazumdar, A.K., Gosh, S.K. and Duttagupta, R. 2001. Study of utilization of mass media and personal cosmopolite source of information in animal husbandry practices. *Indian J. Animal Health*, 40 (1): 62-72.
2. Raj, R.K.;Saathapathy, C. and Das, P. 1992. Extent of mass media in seeking agricultural information. *Orissa Journal of Agricultural Research*. 5 (3-4) : 204-208.