

## Utilization Pattern of Communication Sources among the Farmers of Manipur

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### ABSTRACT

*In the current scenario, agricultural communication sources can be utilized for providing accurate, timely, pertinent information and services to the farmers, thereby facilitating an environment that agriculture occupation is also remunerative. In this context, the study was conducted with an aim to analyze the utilization level regarding the communication sources of the farming community and identify the associated attributes with it. The study was conducted in Imphal-West and Bishnupur district of Manipur. The multistage purposive and proportionate random sampling procedure was followed to identify the respondents of the study. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the farmers were in middle age group having medium level of education, land holding, socio-economic status, cosmopolitanism and scientific orientation. Utilization of communication sources, socio-economic status, scientific orientation, information seeking behaviour and market orientation were found significantly different among the whole population even if, there was no significant difference in awareness of communication sources among the farmers of Bishnupur district. However, the association of communication, sources utilization pattern with personal and socio-economic characteristics of farmers differs in between the two districts. Significant association was found between utilization of communication sources and level of education, land holding, SE status, cosmopolitanism, scientific orientation, information seeking behaviour and market orientation. Information KIOSK at village level should be established in both the districts for increasing the usage of these sources by the farmers.*

**Key words:** Agricultural communication; Communication sources; Cosmopolitanism; Information access;

The process of globalization in India in last 20 years has brought many changes in Indian economy as well as brought plenty of scope for communication to expand its network at global level. Recent advances in agricultural communication have affected the working of cultural life and are shaping the lifestyle of the rural people. Communication science has passed through simple interaction to highly complex process of information network resulting to the growth of information society. Today's world can be viewed on information continuum from lower degree of information access to the higher one.

Effective communication from different sources and channels are the essence of extension, which provides knowledge and information for rural people to modify their behaviour in the ways that provide sustainable benefits to them and to the society (Gunawardana, 2005). Farmers use many different sources to obtain the knowledge and information they

need to manage their farms well. The information and knowledge are increasingly been seen as new factors of agricultural production partially replacing the traditional factors of production land, labour and capital. The growth of communication technologies is a process that is both a product and a stimulus parallel phenomenon of globalization (Marrow, 2002).

It is important to know the type of communication media being used by the farmers, the extent or frequency of their use by people and also the degree of usefulness of various channels in the field of agriculture. Effective use of communication channels for dissemination of information helps to reduce the time taken in the adoption process. Knowledge about the communication channels would be helpful in developing a suitable extension strategy to uplift SE status of the farmers.

Utilization of improved agricultural technology by the farmers, to a large extent, depends upon the effective sources of information and channels to which they are

generally exposed directly or indirectly. The mass media are quick economical but lack crucial elements of empathy and feedback which are apparent in face to face situation (*Devi and Verma, 2011*). But, to harness the potential for agricultural development, it is essential to understand the existing sources of information and their utility and relevance in terms of outreach, subject matter coverage and utilization by the farmers.

With the advancement of information technology, common people are having easy access to a number of information channels and sources. The tribal farmers of North- East are also having access to different sources and channels of information due to this explosion of information. In rural Manipur, the farmers needed a variety of information related to seed varieties, pesticides, and fertilizer. The preferred medium was radio, followed by television and newspapers (*Meitei and Devi, 2009*). Keeping the above facts in view, the study was conducted with an aim to analyze the utilization level regarding the communication sources of the farming community and identify the associated attributes with it.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Imphal-West and Bishnupur district of Manipur which were purposively selected to represent the diversity between these districts in terms of agricultural research and extension organization. The two blocks, namely Imphal-West I and Imphal-West II from Imphal-West district and two blocks namely Moirang from Bishnupur from Bishnupur district were selected randomly for the present study. The predicted variable utilization of communication sources was operationalised as the state or ability to perceive, feel or to be responsive of different agricultural communication sources by the farmers. The responses were recorded in five point continuum as daily, once a week, once a fortnight, once a month and never and were given 4, 3, 2, 1 and 0 scores, respectively. The maximum possible score was 36 and minimum was zero. Based on the total score obtained by the respondents, they were grouped into three categories low, medium and high, keeping the mean and standard deviation as check. Selection of variables has been made in accordance with the objectives of the study and was measured based on Mean  $\pm$   $\frac{1}{2}$  SD. The data were collected from farmers with the help of Agriculture

Officers (AOs), Training Officers (TOs) and Village Level Workers (VLWs) using pretested, structured interview schedule through personal interview method. The data were processed into statistical tools like frequency, mean, percentage, standard deviation, Mann-Whitney U test, Chi-square test and Kruskal-Wallis test to draw a definite conclusion from the findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data of Table 1, it can be concluded that majority of the respondents belonged to middle age group that was from 35 to 50 years of age, studied from 5th to 10th standards, had medium level of land holding, that was from 4.1 ha to 10 ha of land, and had medium socio economic status, that was from score 13.50 to 16.49 and medium level of cosmopolitanism with a score 7.35 to 11.08. The respondents were mostly associated with the sole farming occupation. Majority of the respondents had medium scientific orientation with a score 7.45 to 10.05, high information seeking behavior with a score 24.33 to 36 and low market orientation with a score 1 to 5.45.

The data in Table 2 presents the Kruskal Wallis analysis result to find the difference between variables considered for the study among two districts. It shows that utilization of communication sources, education, socio-economic status, information seeking behaviour and market orientation had significant difference among the farmers with different land holding status. Respondents with larger land holding had more opportunities and potentialities to try and adopt variety of technological innovations. Since, the respondents ventured out in utilizing agricultural innovations, there was a need for agricultural information from the credible and trustworthy sources of agricultural communication. The small and medium land holding farmers are more educated and developed more access to extension agencies, mass media, development organizations, achievement motivation, decision making ability, cosmopolitanism, economic motivation and inclined to use innovations by taking the high risk. Medium land holding farmers had sound socio-economic status with improved economic conditions and enabled them not only to access agricultural information from traditional sources but also from modern tools such as interactive multi-media discs, internet, mobile telephony *etc.* Farmers with medium land holding adopt improved technologies earlier than others in his social system and can take

**Table 1: Distribution of farmers' according to their personal and socio- economic characteristics and utilization of agricultural communication sources in both the districts (N= 120)**

Characteristics	Categories	No.	%
Age	Young age (below 35)	31	25.83
	Middle age (35 – 50)	53	44.16
	Old age (above 50)	36	30.00
Education	Below primary	6	5.00
	Primary to middle	47	52.09
	Above 10 <sup>th</sup>	36	42.92
Land holdings	Marginal (< 1 ha)	24	20.00
	Small and semi medium	45	37.50
	Medium (4.1 to 10 ha)	51	42.50
Occupation	Farming alone	78	65.00
	Farming & Subsidiary	31	25.83
	Farming & Govt.	11	9.17
SE Status	Low (1 to 13.49)	36	30.00
	Medium (13.50 to 16.49)	46	38.33
	High (16.50 to 20)	38	31.66
Cosmopolitaness	Low (1 to 7.34)	30	25.00
	Medium (7.35 to 11.08)	81	67.50
	High (11.09 to 15 )	9	7.50
Scientific orientation	Low (1 to 7.44 )	44	36.66
	Medium (7.45 to 10.05)	62	51.66
	High (10.06 to 13)	14	11.66
Information behaviour	Low (1 to 17.17)	32	26.66
	Medium (17.18 to 24.32)	15	12.50
	High (24.33 to 36)	73	60.83
Market orientation	Low (1 to 5.45)	51	42.50
	Medium (5.46 to 9.29)	46	38.33
	High (9.30 to 13)	23	19.16

relative advantage of the innovations. Now, this information is being rightly provided to the respondents by the extension agencies in various communication sources. So, respondents are fully aware about communication sources and start utilizing them. Farmers with medium land holding produce more crops. Price of commodities produced by respondents, place in which the commodities are to be marketed and promotion strategy of commodity to have edge over other competitor was the main concerns by the respondents in the study. These market orientations of respondents are supported by extension agencies to the respondents. Again, the respondents were aware about the roles of communication tools in agricultural marketing and consequently, respondents utilize the different source of communications.

Table 3 presents the Mann- Whitney U test result

**Table 2. Kruskal Wallis test of utilization of agricultural communication sources and the predictor characteristics among the farmers with different land holding status**

Variables	Mean Score			Kruskal Wallis
	Marginal	Small	Medium	
Utilization of agril. communi. sources	25.96	25.86	27.01	12.18*
Age	49.46	48.82	50.63	1.05
Education	5.62	5.58	5.95	14.36*
Occupation	1.55	1.34	2.02	3.26
SE status	15.16	15.17	16.11	24.16*
Cosmopolitaness	10.55	10.52	10.58	3.11
Scientific orientation	9.76	9.56	9.83	2.06
Info. behaviour	19.21	20.80	20.95	17.14*
Market orientation	7.62	6.89	7.74	15.03*

\*Significant at 5% level

**Table 3. Mann-Whitney U test of utilization of agricultural communication sources and predictor characteristics of farmers in two districts of Manipur**

Variables	Mean Score		Mann-Whitney U test
	Bishn-upur	Imphal-West	
Utilization of agril. communi. sources	20.30	23.96	0.05*
Age	48.88	49.00	0.51
Education	5.85	6.00	0.73
Occupation	1.35	1.75	0.61
SE status	12.08	14.09	0.03*
Cosmopolitaness	10.19	10.28	0.64
Scientific orientation	9.08	9.23	0.002*
Information behaviour	5.03	5.43	0.04*
Market orientation	6.38	7.03	0.01*

to find the difference of variables among the two districts. It shows that there was significant difference between the two districts in their utilization of agricultural communication sources, SE status, scientific orientation, info. seeking behaviour and market orientation. Farmers in Imphal-West district better the socio-economic condition with more area of land under agriculture, thereby seeking and utilizing more information on agriculture when compare to those farmers having less area under agriculture in Bishnupur district. Since there was difference among the farmers, there was marked difference in use of advisory services such as information on package of practices, disease/pest early warning system, weather forecasting, crop insurance *etc.* at the earliest possible time. Since Imphal-West district has more number of public and private extension services when compared to Bishnupur in two districts of Manipur.

Table 4 depicts that utilization of agricultural communication sources has significant association with the variables education, land holdings, socio-economic status, cosmopolitaness, scientific orientation, information seeking behaviour and market orientation. It was observed that more the educational level of respondents, more was the involvement in agriculture and agriculturally allied activities which increases utilizing of various communication sources for retrieving information. Higher socio-economic status widens the quest of information and ways to get the information. Thus, the advent of different information sources was utilized that provided enormous opportunities for repeated exposure of farmers to new technology motivating them to take further interest to learn about them. Cosmopolitaness provides an opportunity for respondents to get more reliable information through interaction with progressive farmers, friends, relatives and extension personnel. Various mass media like television, radio and newspapers provide recent and authentic information regarding new improved agricultural practices which further appeal and create interest in the farmer to retrieve more information regarding particular practice. Higher scientific orientation of the farmers leads to a desire to acquire higher knowledge in order to keep themselves abreast with recent improved agricultural practices by collecting up to date information from various related sources. Good information seeking behaviour has helped them to gain more knowledge of the farmers which could intensify extension activities in the village to gather more information among the farmers. Utilization of various communication sources had made the farmers able, clear, talented, capable and competent to take judgment to sell their products for better price by analysing various prevailing infrastructure and market intelligence. Farmers with market orientation will be enthusiastic and interested to get required information, which further

**Table 4. Association between farmers' utilization of agricultural communication sources and their personal and socio-economic predictor characteristics**

Variables	$\chi^2$
Age	3.01
Education	10.45*
Land holdings	12.03*
Occupation	4.56
Socio- economic status	20.19*
Cosmopolitaness	19.80*
Scientific orientation	23.64*
Information seeking behaviour	31.01*
Market orientation	17.08*

\*Significant at 5% level

motivates the managerial personnel to provide assistance by seeking certain market information and intelligence.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that low access to most agricultural communication sources in both Imphal-West and Bishnupur district could be enhanced by developing a regular programme of interaction between the farmers and the most competent sources of information, so that the farmers may be kept abreast with the latest developments in every field. It was observed from the study that farmers with comparatively high education are able to utilize different communication sources for retrieving information about farming. In order to come in concrete conclusion about an agricultural predicament, the respondents seek help from extension agencies. Because of their frequent interface, respondents aware of usage communication tools and consequently, by the vision of the advantages on communication in agricultural farming, farmers with scientific orientation utilized different communication tools.

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