

Received : 04.10.2022 | Accepted : 10.12.2022 | Online published : 15.12.2022

[https://doi.org/10.54986/irjee/2022/dec\\_spl/295-299](https://doi.org/10.54986/irjee/2022/dec_spl/295-299)I  
R  
J  
ESOCIETY OF  
EXTENSION  
EDUCATION

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Correlates of Utility Perception of Agricultural Information by Farmer Readers

**Abhishek Pathak<sup>1</sup> and Arpita Sharma<sup>2</sup>**

1. Ph. D Scholar,  
2. Assistant. Professor,  
Department of Agricultural  
Communication, GBPUAT,  
Pantnagar, Uttarakhand, India  
Corresponding author e-mail:  
[abhi.01.pathak@gmail.com](mailto:abhi.01.pathak@gmail.com)

**ABSTRACT**

*The present age may be considered as information age as information is accepted as an important resource in this century. It may be described as a stimulating factor for the new processes and outcomes. Newspaper is arguably one of the most cost-effective and appropriate media to transfer agricultural information. Many studies have also shown that newspaper is the most popular source of getting latest agricultural information and it has an important credibility element. The present study was conducted in Kumaon division of Uttarakhand. The data for the study was collected by personally visiting the farmer readers with the help of a structured interview schedule to assess the correlates of utility perception of agricultural information and farmers. Variables under study were age, education, family size, annual income, land holding, social participation, extension contact, scientific orientation, leisure time, innovativeness, and mass media exposure. Four variables viz., education (0.410), leisure time (0.355), scientific orientation (0.455) and mass media exposure (0.517) were found to have a significant relationship with perceived utility. It was also found that independent variables under study were affecting only 46.29 per cent ( $R^2 = 0.4629$ ) to the perceived utility of the farmers for the information published.*

**Key words:** Utility perception; Agricultural information; Farmer readers; Newspaper; Mass media.

The present age may be considered as information age and information is considered as an important resource in this century. It may be described as a stimulating factor for the new processes and outcomes. The use and awareness of correct information guarantee the proper functioning of an organization or an individual. Information is an important resource for survival and growth of an individual (Ayanyemi, 2006). Humans have a tendency and are eager to know new and desired things as early as possible. Sufficient and rightly presented information will help in improving the pace of rural development projects, policies, and programs.

Media plays an important role in our society by identifying the issues and aware the public so further they may push the government to formulate the policies accordingly (Walake et al., 2021). Information needs to be communicated from one place to the other. This role is solely dependent on mass media. Mass

media guide, entertain, and educate the people around the world. The role of media in development can be divided into three parts i.e. (a) to instruct (b) to inform (c) to participate. Print media was the first media that was used for spreading information to the mass. Print media is the most reachable, accessible, and followed media among all other media. Newspaper has always enjoyed the position of most liked medium to reach a large number of people until the electronic media emerged as a tough competitor but still, newspapers have maintained their great stake in India. Agricultural journalism viz; writing and reporting in agriculture was evolved for the same purpose. Newspaper is arguably one of the most cost-effective and appropriate media to transfer agricultural information. Many studies have also shown that newspaper is the most popular source of getting latest agricultural information and it has the important credibility element (Pathak and Sharma, 2021).

Considering the facts that newspaper provides agricultural information to the rural farmers, the present study was undertaken with following objectives:

- To study socio-economic, communication and psychological characteristics of farmer readers.
- To analyse the relationship of selected profile characteristics and utility perception of agricultural information by farmer readers.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Kumaon division of Uttarakhand. Udham Singh Nagar district was selected purposively since it had maximum circulation of highest circulated newspaper of Uttarakhand (Amar Ujala). Udham Singh Nagar district has seven blocks out of which Rudrapur block was selected randomly. A total of 120 farmer newspaper subscribers were chosen in consultation with local newspaper distributors, who could actually report based on their experience with newspaper. An analytical research design was used for the study. The data for the study was collected by personally visiting the farmer readers with the help of a structured interview schedule in the month of September and October 2020. The statistical methods and tests like frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, coefficient of correlation, testing the significance of correlation coefficient and multiple regression were used for the analysis and interpretation of data.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

*Socio-economic, communication and psychological characteristics of farmer readers* : Different profile characteristics of farmer readers viz; age, education, family size, social participation, extension contact, annual income, land holding, leisure time, innovativeness, scientific orientation and mass media exposure were studied and data pertaining to it is presented in Table 1.

It can be observed from table 1 that majority (65.84 %) of the respondents were found to be in middle-aged group followed by 18.33 per cent in old aged group and only 15.83 per cent belonged to young age group. Education status of respondents depicts that majority of the respondents had been to the formal education system. It is evident from the data of education that maximum percentage (36.67

**Table 1. Profile Characteristics of respondents (N= 120)**

Characteristic category	No.	%
<i>Age (years)</i>		
Young (<40)	19	15.83
Middle-aged (40 to 60)	79	65.84
Old (>60)	22	18.33
<i>Education status</i>		
Can read only	02	01.67
Can read and write	18	15
Primary education	22	18.33
High school	44	36.67
Intermediate	16	13.33
Diploma	05	4.17
Graduation	10	8.33
Post-graduation	03	02.5
<i>Family size</i>		
Small (<4)	10	8.34
Medium (4 to 9)	103	85.83
Large (>9)	07	5.83
<i>Annual income</i>		
Low (<2,48,255)	93	77.5
Medium (2,48,255 to 8,44,777)	26	21.67
High (>8,44,777)	01	0.83
<i>Land holding (ha)</i>		
Marginal (<1)	03	02.5
Small (1 to 2)	24	20
Small-medium (2 to 4)	54	45
Medium (4 to 10)	36	30
Large (>10)	03	02.5
<i>Social participation</i>		
Low (< 5)	111	92.5
Medium (5 to 10)	08	6.67
High (> 10)	01	0.83
<i>Extension Contact</i>		
Low (< 1)	24	20
Medium (1 to 4)	83	69.16
High (> 4)	13	10.84
<i>Leisure time</i>		
Low (<2 hours)	09	7.5
Medium (2 to 4 hours)	92	76.67
High (> 4 hours)	19	15.83
<i>Innovativeness</i>		
Low (<8)	12	10
Medium (8-12)	77	64.17
High (>12)	31	25.83
<i>Scientific orientation</i>		
Low (<11)	19	15.83
Medium (11 to 16)	80	66.67
High (>16)	21	17.5
<i>Mass media exposure</i>		
Low (<15)	11	9.16
Medium (15 to 23)	88	73.34
High (>23)	21	17.5

%) of the respondents had a high school level of education i.e., they have completed their high school and they were followed by respondents having primary education (18.33%), 15 per cent respondents were in the category of reading and writing, 13.33 per cent respondents were educated up to intermediate. The 8.33 per cent of the respondents were graduate, 4.17 per cent of respondents were diploma holder and only 2.5 per cent were post graduates. Very small proportions (1.67%) of the respondents were able to read-only. It can be observed that majority (85.83 %) of the respondents were in medium size family, having members varying from four to nine and they were followed by small size family (8.34%) with up to three family members and large families (5.83%) with more than nine family members. It is evident from table about the annual income of the respondents that majority (77.5%) of the respondents had annual income in low category followed by medium (21.67%) and only 0.83 per cent respondents were in high income category. It was noticed that maximum number (45%) of the respondents were farmers of small-medium category having land holding from two to four hectares followed by medium land holding (30%) farmers. Small size farmer's composition was 20 per cent whereas marginal and large farmers were found to be 2.5 per cent each. It could be observed that majority of the respondents (92.5 %) have low social participation followed by medium (6.67%) and only 0.83 per cent had high level of social participation. It can be observed that majority (69.16%) of the respondents had medium level of extension contact followed by low extension contact for 20 per cent of the respondents and 10.84 per cent of the respondents had high extension contact. The leisure or free time that a respondent usually has in a day and it was observed from the data that majority (76.67%) of the respondents had leisure time in medium category i.e., they had free time per day ranging from two hours to four hours. About 15.83 per cent of the respondents had leisure time in medium category i.e., more than four hours per day and 7.5 per cent of the respondents had leisure time less than two hours.

The innovativeness of respondents depicts that majority (64.17%) of the respondents had medium level of the innovativeness which was followed by high innovativeness for the 25.83 per cent respondents and 10 per cent of the respondents had low level of innovativeness. Scientific orientation of the

respondents reveals that majority of them (75%) had medium level of scientific orientation whereas 14.17 per cent had low level of scientific orientation and 10.83 per cent had high level of scientific orientation. It was observed from the data that 73.34 per cent of the respondents had mass media exposure of medium level, followed by 17.5 per cent of the respondents having high level of mass media exposure and 9.16 per cent of the respondents had low level of mass media exposure.

*Relationship of selected profile characteristics and utility perception of agricultural information by farmer readers.* : The coefficient of correlation of profile characteristics of farmer readers with utility perception of agricultural information is depicted in Table 2.

*Age* : Age of the readers was found to be negatively related with a non-significant relationship with the utility perception of agricultural information published in the newspaper. Such a relation could be there as farmers had tendency to read the newspaper but they may not consider the agricultural information necessary and continue to do farming as per their own ways and believe more on their experience of farming with growing age thus making a negative relation. The findings of the study were in line with *Jambhale et al. (2015)* who found negative relation of age with perceived utility.

*Education* : Education level of the farmer readers was found to be positively and significantly related with the utility perception of agricultural information

**Table 2. The coefficient of correlation of profile characteristics of farmer readers with utility perception of agricultural information**

Independent variable	Correlation coefficient (r)	t-calculated
Age	-0.045	-0.490
Education	0.410**	4.882
Family size	-0.112	-1.224
Social participation	0.016	0.173
Extension contacts	0.088	0.963
Annual income	-0.027	-0.293
Land holding	-0.026	-0.282
Leisure time	0.355**	4.127
Innovativeness	0.106	1.528
Scientific orientation	0.455**	6.231
Mass media exposure	0.517**	6.566

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level of probability

published in the newspaper. Higher education level leads to more exposure of a person. Also with education there is increase in comprehension of concepts and improvement of reading skills. It was found after discussing with the farmers that they read the useful information in newspaper and would be exploring the relevant information further to know about it in depth, so that it benefits them. The finding for education was in line with *Shinde (2016)*.

*Family size* : Family size of the farmer readers was found to be non-significant and negatively related with the utility perception of agricultural information published in the newspaper. The more is the family size more becomes their involvement with other family members especially kids of the family. Also involvement of more people of family together in farming thus, reducing their time to interact with newspaper. The finding for family size was in line with *Lad (2014)*.

*Social participation* : Social participation of the farmer readers was found to be non-significant and positively related with the utility perception of agricultural information published in the newspaper. Such relationship might be due to the fact that different farmers would be getting some information from their social groups as they may help them to get aware of different agricultural issues coming in newspaper when they would be interacting and discussing the useful information coming in the newspaper for their use.

*Extension contacts* : Extension contact of the farmer readers was found to be non-significant and positively related with the utility perception of agricultural information published in the newspaper. Such relationship of farmer readers would be due to information about different agricultural issue might be provided by extension agents through newspaper. Also they might be guiding and informing them to read specific article about some of their issue so they may understand things in a better way. The findings of the study were in line with *Shiraskar (2011)*.

*Annual income* : Annual income was found to be negatively and non-significantly related with the utility perception of agricultural information published in the newspaper. The possible reason for such a relation could be that with an increase in income their access to other sources of information like mobile, internet increases thus not depending on newspaper as a source of information.

*Land holding* : Land holding was found to be negatively and non-significantly related with the utility perception of the agricultural information published in the newspaper. The reason for such relationship could be that farmers with large size of farming land, were involved more in management of their fields and they seek advice directly from experts and rely more on their farming experiences and fellow farmers for their issues related to farming.

*Leisure time* : Leisure time was found to be positively and significantly related with the utility perception of the agricultural information published in the newspaper. Such relation was observed because many farmers considered about reading the paper for agricultural information in depth during their leisure time. With increase in their leisure time there interaction with newspaper increases.

*Innovativeness* : Innovativeness had a positive and non-significant relation with the utility perception of the agricultural information published in the newspaper. Such relationship is due to the fact that innovative farmers by virtue of their scientific thinking and knowledge must be gathering information from different sources according to their suitability. They when come in contact of some new information or technology related to agriculture in newspaper, they due to their innovativeness must be trying to adopt it.

*Scientific orientation* : Scientific orientation had a positive significant relationship with the utility perception of the agricultural information published in the newspaper. Such relation may be due the fact that more the scientific orientation of the farmer, more becomes their scientific outlook when interacting with an information while reading newspaper and thus, increasing the perceived utility.

*Mass media exposure* : Mass media exposure was positively and significantly related with the utility perception of the agricultural information published in the newspaper. The farmers might be interacting with some desired information in newspaper and then they would be looking for it in other mass media like television, internet as well, thus enhancing the utility for them with increased mass media exposure.

*Multiple regression equation for independent variables with dependent variable (Utility perception)* : Regression analysis tells about the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable based on the  $R^2$  value i.e., coefficient of determination. In the context



of present study the coefficient of determination is 0.4629 that signifies variables under study may lead to 46.29 per cent variation in the dependent variable utility perception. Whereas remaining 53.71 per cent variation in the dependent variable could be attributed to either intervening or extraneous variables. The regression equation for the utility perception based on Table 3 was worked out as :

Dependent Variable	Regression Equation	R <sup>2</sup>
Utility Perception	22.14+ 0.002 Age + 0.273 Education - 0.069 Family size - 0.281 Land Holding + 0.394 Leisure time + 0.129 Social participation + 0.010 Extension contact + 0.268 Scientific orientation - 0.057 Innovativeness + 0.236 Mass media exposure	0.4629

Income of the respondent has almost zero impact on their utility perception for newspaper thus it was not considered while formulating the equation. It could be interpreted from the mentioned result that more variables should have been in the focus of the study which could have been identified as the potential factors for affecting the utility perception of the farmer readers. There are several intervening and extraneous variables which are not present but have a major impact on utility perception.

## CONCLUSION

With growing use of ICTs, the dependence on print media has been decreasing but still it creates a deep impact on a substantial rural population. The majority farmer readers in rural areas have educational status of more than high school and have very less social participation since they are self-sufficient in getting information from various sources. The study revealed that out of eleven variables taken for the study of readers of Amar Ujala, only four variables viz., education, leisure time, scientific orientation and mass media exposure were found to have a significant relationship with perceived utility.

Further it was observed that age, family size, annual income and land holding were found to be negatively related with the perceived utility, whereas social participation, extension contact and innovativeness were positively related with the utility perception of newspaper. It was also noticed that independent variables taken for study were determining only 46.29 per cent of the variation in the perceived utility and further more variables should be taken under study so proper relation could be established in identifying the governing factors of perceived utility and thus accordingly the publications could be altered to cater the needs of the farmer readers.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest

## REFERENCES

- Ayanyemi, O.O. (2006). The Role of Information in Enhancing the Status of Women in Developing Countries. *Nigerbiblos* 17(1): 151- 152.
- Jambhale, M.G.; Chikhale, N.J. and Deshmukh, A.N. (2015). Correlates of utility perception of Krushi Patrika by the respondents. *Advance Res. J. Social Sci.*, 6 (2): 149-154.
- Lad, A.S. (2014). Utility perception of mass media by the farm women. PhD Thesis (Unpublished), VN Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth, Parbhani, Maharashtra, India.
- Pathak, A. and Sharma, A. (2021). Utility Perception of agricultural information by farmers. *Indian Res.J. Ext. Edu.*, 21(4):76-79.
- Shinde, M.R. (2016). Utility perception of VNMKV calendar by the readers. PhD Thesis (Unpublished), Vasantrao Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth, Parbhani, Maharashtra, India.
- Shiraskar, S.B. (2011). Utility of newspaper as perceived by the farmers. M.Sc. Thesis (Unpublished), Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth, Akola, Maharashtra, India.
- Walake, R. C.; Singh, D. K.; Yadav, R. N. and Singh, L. B. (2021). Utilization pattern of various sources of information for the awareness of "Swachh Bharat Mission" in Meerut District. *Indian Res.J. Ext.Edu.*, 21(1):67-70.

• • • • •