

## AWARENESS OF FARMERS ABOUT MODERN COMMUNICATION MEDIA IN UDAIPUR DISTRICT OF RAJASTHAN

Chaturbhuj Yadav\*, N. K. Punjabi\*\*, F.L.Sharma\*\*\* and Santosh Devi Samota\*\*\*\*

### ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in Udaipur district of Rajasthan. Eight villages were selected from two panchayat samities of Udaipur district. Total, 120 respondents were included in the sample of study. The finding of study indicated that significant number of farmers (45.83%) had medium level of awareness about modern communication media. The extent of awareness in non-tribal farmers ranging from 33.33 to 98.33 per cent, whereas, in tribal it was found to be from 13.33 to 93.33 percent. It was also observed that there was significant difference between non-tribal and tribal panchayat samiti respondents with regard to status of awareness.

### INTRODUCTION

Indian agriculture contributes 14.2 per cent of our GDP and approximately 60 per cent Indians derive their livelihood from the agricultural sector. Today farmers want not only the two-time bread for their families from their hard sweat but also surplus food production, which can be sold in the market to get sufficient money to fulfill their other daily needs. During the past two decades each and every sector has changed their strategies in view of global competition but for information dissemination at farmers level still age old concept of grass root level workers and adopted villages and localities is continuing where after introduction of technology, years together we have to wait for its percolation to the farm population (Anonymous, 2011). Agricultural extension depends largely on information exchange between and among farmers and a broad range of other actors. Frontline extension workers who are the direct link between farmers and other sectors in the agricultural knowledge and information system (AKIS), are well positioned to make use of ICT to access expert knowledge or other types of information that could facilitate the accomplishment of their routine

activities (Omotayo, 2005)

Dissemination of the required and recent agricultural information to the farmers in scattered villages at the variegated geographical situation in India is very difficult task. Transfer of technology to farmers is not a one time exercise because new farm technology is being constantly evolved. A continuous flow of technologies in an appropriate manner is vital to provide quick benefit of this development to the farmers (Mehta, 2003).

Radio and TV sets are available with more than 50 per cent farmers but only few people subscribing newspaper and magazine. The Radio and TV was used maximum by the farmers for agricultural information (Mishra, 2003). Information and communication technologies (ICTs) may be viewed in different ways. The World Bank defines ICTs as "the set of activities which facilitate by electronic means the processing, transmission and display of information (Rodriguez and Wilson, 2000). Information and communication technologies play a vital role in quick dissemination and receiving of agricultural information by the farmers. Therefore, farmers should be fully awarded about application of ICT tools for receiving the latest information from

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\* PG Scholar, Department of Extension Education, Rajasthan College of Agriculture, Udaipur.

\*\* Professor and Head, Department of Extension Education, Rajasthan College of Agriculture, Udaipur.

\*\*\* Professor, Department of Extension Education, Rajasthan College of Agriculture, Udaipur.

\*\*\*\* Ph.D Scholar, Department of Extension Education, Rajasthan College of Agriculture, Udaipur.

different sources. Looking to the above facts the present study was undertaken with specific objective to find out the awareness of farmers about modern communication media.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in purposively selected Udaipur district of Southern Rajasthan. Because it is the largest district (Geographic area) in Southern Rajasthan and the use of ICT for transfer of technology in agriculture is relatively higher than neighboring districts. The district has a tremendous scope for promotion of modern communication media. Administratively the district includes eleven panchayat samities, out of these two, one each tribal and non-tribal was selected for the research work.

Thereafter, four villages from each panchayat samiti were selected on the basis of maximum use of modern communication media, thereby including a total of 8 villages in the study sample. While selection of the respondents, a category wise comprehensive list of modern media users was prepared with the help of GO's, NGO's and agriculture supervisor of respective villages. Thus, in all 120 farmers (60 Non-tribal and 60 Tribal) were included in the sample of respondents.

Face to face interview technique was used to collect data from the selected respondents. Thereafter, data were analyzed, tabulated and interpreted in the light of the objective of study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Status of awareness of modern communication media

Awareness is the state or ability to perceive, to feel, or to be conscious of events, objects or sensory patterns. It is one of the important components of access and plays an important role in the access to modern media. In order to increase the level of access to modern media among the respondents, it is imperative to examine the existing level of awareness of the respondents about modern communication media.

To get an overview of status of awareness of modern communication media among the respondents, they were classified into three

categories i.e. low, medium and high awareness level on the basis of calculated mean and standard deviation of the awareness score obtained.

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their awareness of modern communication media**

S. No.	Level of awareness	Mavli (NT)		Kherwada (T)		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Low (below 20.39)	19	31.67	21	35	40	33.33
2	Medium (between 20.39 to 23.79)	27	45	28	46.67	55	45.83
3	High (above 23.79)	14	23.33	11	18.33	25	20.83
<b>Total</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

F= Frequency, %= per cent, NT= Non-tribal, T= Tribal

The data contained in table 1 indicate that a considerable number of respondents, (45.83%) had medium level of awareness about modern communication media in the study area. It was followed by 33.33 per cent respondents who possessed low level of awareness, while 20.83 per cent respondents fell under the category of high level of awareness of modern communication media. A critical look to the data in table 1 brings to focus that in case of non-tribal, a large number (45%) of the respondents had medium level of awareness followed by 31.67 per cent having low awareness level and 23.33 per cent having high level of awareness of modern communication media. Further in case of tribal, majority (46.67%) of the respondents had medium level of awareness. This was followed by 35 per cent farmers with low level of awareness and only 18.33 per cent were found to have high level of awareness about modern communication media. Thus, it can be concluded that a large number of modern communication media users in the study area had medium to high status of awareness about modern communication media. It could be inferred that the existing awareness of non-tribal respondents about modern communication media was comparatively higher than the tribal respondents. This may be due to

higher educational level and better economic status of people including required infrastructure facilities for media awareness and access.

#### Aspect-wise awareness of respondents about modern communication media

In the present study a total of twenty five statements were considered to measure the status of awareness among respondents towards different aspects of modern media. To calculate the awareness, Mean Per cent Score (MPS) for each statement was calculated and the rank was given accordingly.

From the data accorded in the table 2 it was observed that a fair majority of respondents of both the categories have heard about mobile phone. This was ranked first by the respondents. Further, majority of respondents (95 MPS) were aware of the fact that mobile phone is a device for seeking information. This aspect was ranked second in relation to awareness of respondents. Similarly, again fair majority of the respondents with mean percent score of 93.34, were found aware and already heard about CD/DVD for getting information, which was ranked third by the respondents.

**Table 2. Status of awareness of respondents towards different aspect of modern communication media**

S. No.	Statements	n = 120					
		Mavli (NT)		Kherwada(T)		Total	
		MPS	Rank	MPS	Rank	MPS	Rank
1	What is ICT?	50.00	23	33.33	24	41.67	23
2	Name modern media known to you?	83.33	9	66.67	13	75.00	12
3	Name ICT tool (s) used by you for seeking agricultural information	66.67	17	63.33	15	65.00	15
4	Can modern communication media be used for seeking agricultural information?	91.66	5	70.00	11	80.83	8
5	Name the ICT centres located in the vicinity of your village?	68.33	15.5	65.00	14	66.67	14
6	Name the advantages of modern media over the traditional media?	76.67	12.5	68.33	12	72.50	13
7	Purpose of using modern media	70.00	14	58.33	17	64.17	16
8	Type of agricultural information obtained	63.33	19	50.00	20	56.67	19.5
9	Is ICT tool use difficult to you?	33.33	25	13.33	25	23.33	25
10	Are ICT tools affordable for the common farmers?	68.33	15.5	51.67	19	60.00	18
11	Have heard about common service centre?	76.67	12.5	80.00	7.5	78.34	9
12	What is common service centre?	53.33	22	43.23	22	48.33	22
13	Types of services provided to you at common service centre?	41.67	24	36.67	23	39.17	24
14	Have you heard about touch screen computers?	78.33	11	73.33	9	75.83	11
15	What is touch screen computer?	65.00	18	60.00	16	62.50	17
16	Types of services provided to you through touch screen computers?	86.67	7	83.33	5	85.00	5.5
17	Have you heard about mobile phone?	98.33	1.5	93.33	1	95.83	1
18	What is mobile phone?	98.33	1.5	91.67	2	95.00	2
19	What type of services can be obtained by the farmers from mobile phones?	81.67	10	71.67	10	76.67	10
20	Have you heard about CD/DVD?	96.67	3	90.00	3	93.34	3
21	What is CD/DVD?	60.00	21	53.33	18	56.67	19.5
22	Type of services obtained by farmers CD/DVD?	61.66	20	48.33	21	55.00	21
23	Have you heard about TV?	95.00	4	88.33	4	91.67	4
24	What is TV?	88.33	6	81.67	6	85.00	5.5
25	Type of services obtained by you from TV?	85.00	8	80.00	7.5	82.50	7

MPS = Mean Per cent Score, NT= Non-tribal, T= Tribal

Further, the majority of the respondents on enquiry expressed that they have heard about TV,

they knew that TV is a device for seeking agricultural information and they were found well aware about

the services provided to the farmers through touch screen computer centre. Thus, they were ranked fourth and fifth based on the obtained mean percent score. Looking to the data in the table 2 respondents were found aware about the type of services they obtained by watching TV. This statement was ranked seventh in the rank order. Further, observation of the data clearly visualized that respondents were aware that modern communication media is used for seeking agricultural information, they already heard about common service centre and well aware about the type of services which can be obtained by them from mobile phones.

These three aspects were ranked eighth, ninth and tenth in the hierarchy of rank order. Remaining items of awareness in the table range between two extremes on the basis of mean percent score. It is discoursing to note that majority of the respondents were found unaware about application of different tools of ICT except mobile phone, which was accorded the last rank by the respondents. Surprisingly considerable numbers of respondents were found unaware about the type of services provided at common service centre and again alarming to record that many of the respondents of the study area (41.67 MPS) could not properly answer what is ICT, accordingly, these items were placed twenty fourth and twenty third ranks respectively. It must be under lined here that nearly half of the respondents were unaware about what common service centre is and what type of services obtained by the farmers from CD/DVD. These two items of awareness were ranked twenty one and

twenty two respectively. The results are presented in Table 2. The findings of the study are in agreement with the results of Stratakis (2004) who observed that the transmission of informative short text messages to farmers and cattle raisers on their mobile phones. Information is available as voice messages on fixed-line and mobile phones and text messages (SMS) or picture messages (MMS) on mobile phones.

## CONCLUSION

Form the above discussion, it can be concluded that, the respondents in the study area in general were aware of different aspects of modern communication media, which is a good sign. Contrary to this majority of the respondents in both the panchyat samities were unaware about the significant aspects and basic concepts of ICT tools. This poor awareness might be creating hindrance in utilizing these tools to the fuller extent for their benefit, therefore, it is recommended that more training programmes and awareness drives be initiated by the government and other concerning agencies to increase the status of awareness among the farmers in the study area to increase its use by the farmers.

## REFERENCES

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