

EXTENT OF UTILIZATION OF INFORMATION SOURCES AND CHANNELS USED BY FARMERS

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ABSTRACT

Different sources and channels are the essence of extension, which provides knowledge and information for rural people to modify behaviour in ways that provide sustainable benefits to them and to society in general. These communication technologies serve both as direct information channels to farmers and as indirect channels improving extension agents, agribusinesses and other intermediaries access to information resources. The study was conducted by interviewing randomly selected 100 farmers of the purposively selected Piprali panchayat samiti of Sikar district of Rajasthan because the farmers of this panchayat samiti were having highest contact to development departments. It was found that the sources which were most utilized by the farmers were neighbours (2.40 MS), private agencies (2.15 MS), friends (1.89 MS), agriculture supervisors (1.77 MS) and progressive farmers (1.61 MS), whereas the least utilized sources by the farmers were agriculture graduates (0.28 MS), ATIC (0.20 MS) and NGOs (0.18 MS). It was further found that the channels which were most utilized by the farmers were group discussion (2.27 MS), group meetings (2.08 MS) television (2.03 MS), radio (1.89 MS), news paper (1.68 MS) and farmer's training (1.59 MS), whereas the least utilized channels by the farmers were literature (1.03 MS), posters/ charts/ circulars (0.85 MS) and field day/field visit (0.43 MS).

INTRODUCTION

The present era is the age of communication, different sources and channels are the essence of extension, which provides knowledge and information for rural people to modify behaviour in ways that provide sustainable benefits to them and to society in general. These communication technologies serve both as direct information channels to farmers and as indirect channels improving extension agents, agribusinesses and other intermediaries access to information resources. Most extension programmes have yet to effectively integrate information communication technology into systems for supporting extension staff and making information available to clients.

The present agricultural extension system, which is highly compartmentalized has several inherent weaknesses. To meet the needs of "Information Hungry" farmers and women and

youth engaged in farming, the present extension system has to be geared. The information is also a critical input and as important as other key inputs such as credit, seeds, nutrients and water. Different sources and channels of agriculture information can play important role to meet this requirement. Television, radio, newspaper, magazines and other sources and channels of agriculture information should also be given proper attention.

Though a large number of sources and channels of agricultural information are available for disseminating the agricultural messages, it is of utmost importance to know the choices and preferences of farmers attached to different sources and channels in their socio-economic set up.

The Sikar district is one of the district having one Krishi Vigyan Kendra and one Agriculture Research Station. This district is having third rank in literacy and first rank in water use efficiency in

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Rajasthan. Keeping all these facts in mind the present investigation “Extent of utilization of different information sources and channels by farmers of Piprali Panchayat Samiti of district Sikar, Rajasthan” was under taken .

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in purposively selected Piprali panchayat samiti of Sikar district of Rajasthan because the farmers of this panchayat samiti were having highest contact to development departments. From Piprali panchayat samiti five-gram panchayat 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 by personal interview method. To measure the extent of utilization of different sources and channels by the farmers a scale was developed by the investigator by getting expert opinion and following the recommended procedure of scale development. By applying the scale, farmers were assessed for their extent of utilization of different sources and channels for obtaining information. The data so collected were then classified, tabulated and inferences were drawn after

subjecting the data to appropriate statistical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this part an attempt was made to know the extent of utilization of different sources and channels used by farmers. For this purpose the responses of farmers were collected on a four point continuum namely most utilized, utilized, less utilized and not utilized assigning score of 3, 2, 1 & 0 respectively. The mean score for each source and channel was calculated and the sources and channels were ranked according to their respective mean scores. The results have been presented in the Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1 reveals that the source “neighbours” was most utilized by farmers and was ranked first with mean score 2.40 as it was perceived most utilized by 53 per cent farmers, utilized by 37 per cent farmers, less utilized by 7 per cent farmers and not utilized by 3 per cent farmers. The “private agencies” was ranked second with mean score 2.15 where as the “friends” got third rank with mean score 1.89. The fourth rank was occupied by “agriculture supervisor” (1.77 MS) followed by “progressive farmers” (1.61 MS), “relatives” (1.54 MS), “research stations” (1.18 MS), “A.A.Os.” (0.35 MS), “ATIC” (0.29 MS), “agriculture graduate” (0.28

Table: 1 Extent of utilization of information sources as perceived by farmers

(n = 100)

| S. No. | Source of Information | Most utilized | Utilized | Less utilized | Not utilized | Mean Score | Rank |
|--------|-------------------------|---------------|----------|---------------|--------------|------------|------|
| 1. | A.O. | 0 | 5 | 10 | 85 | .20 | XI |
| 2. | A.A.O | 0 | 10 | 15 | 75 | .35 | VIII |
| 3. | Agriculture Supervisors | 23 | 44 | 20 | 13 | 1.77 | IV |
| 4. | Friends | 12 | 70 | 13 | 5 | 1.89 | III |
| 5. | Neighbours | 53 | 37 | 7 | 3 | 2.40 | I |
| 6. | Private agencies | 34 | 52 | 9 | 5 | 2.15 | II |
| 7. | Progressive farmers | 19 | 37 | 30 | 14 | 1.61 | V |
| 8. | Relatives | 17 | 33 | 39 | 11 | 1.54 | VI |
| 9. | Research stations | 11 | 20 | 45 | 24 | 1.18 | VII |
| 10. | NGOs | 0 | 4 | 10 | 86 | .18 | XII |
| 11. | Agriculture graduates | 0 | 8 | 12 | 80 | .28 | X |
| 12. | ATIC. | 4 | 5 | 7 | 84 | .29 | IX |

MS) and "A.Os" (0.20 MS). The source "NGOs" (0.18 MS) was least utilized by the farmers, as it was not utilized by 86 per cent farmers, less used by 10 per cent farmers, utilized by 4 per cent of farmers and no farmers perceived it as most utilized source of information.

The findings revealed that the neighbours was the most utilized source and got the first place in order of preference. This might be due to the reason that farmers remain more time in contact with neighbours. The techniques employed on neighbour's, field can easily be implemented in the same situation on their field proving the principle of seeing is perceiving. Farmers believe more in the techniques they see on neighbour's field and inquires more and more about the improved practices.

The "private agencies" were ranked second most utilized source by the farmers. This might be due to the fact that the "private agencies" strives to increase their sale of agriculture inputs so they remain more in contact with farmers. The private agencies were easily accessible to the farmers in their locality and they play dual role of providing product and consultancy services.

The "friends" were ranked third most utilized source by the farmers. This might be due to the reason that whenever two or more farmers friends meet they transact their views and ideas and meanwhile they also give and take agricultural information. Friends have common understanding so they seek information frankly from each other and but than in the practice.

The "agriculture supervisor" was fourth most utilized source by the farmers. This might be due to the reason that agriculture supervisor is a technical person appointed by government to assist farmers and he also supplies agricultural inputs so the farmers are attracted towards him but his availability is limited due to the vast number of farmers under a single supervisor.

The "NGOs" was least utilized by the farmers. This might be due to the reason that no NGOs was working in the investigation area. Some progressive farmers which have good contacts with NGOs can seek information from them, but they do not utilize their informations as they think that the NGO staff members are not qualified and have poor knowledge about farm practices so they do not want to take any risk about their crops.

Table 2. Extent of utilization of information channels as perceived by farmers

(n = 100)

| S.No. | Channels of Information | Most utilized | Utilized | Less utilized | Not utilized | Mean Score | Rank |
|-------|---------------------------------|---------------|----------|---------------|--------------|------------|------|
| 1. | Television | 36 | 40 | 15 | 9 | 2.03 | III |
| 2. | Radio | 37 | 26 | 26 | 11 | 1.89 | IV |
| 3. | News paper | 18 | 42 | 30 | 10 | 1.68 | V |
| 4. | Literature | 13 | 16 | 32 | 39 | 1.03 | X |
| 5. | Kisan mela | 15 | 25 | 34 | 26 | 1.29 | VII |
| 6. | Farmer's training | 25 | 31 | 22 | 22 | 1.59 | VI |
| 7. | Group discussion | 46 | 35 | 19 | 0 | 2.27 | I |
| 8. | Group meetings | 34 | 40 | 26 | 0 | 2.08 | II |
| 9. | Poster/Charts/Circulars | 8 | 18 | 25 | 49 | 0.85 | XI |
| 10. | Field day/Field visit | 4 | 9 | 13 | 74 | .43 | XII |
| 11. | Result and Method demonstration | 13 | 25 | 36 | 28 | 1.25 | VIII |
| 12. | Exhibition | 12 | 26 | 35 | 27 | 1.23 | IX |

Data in Table 2 regarding extent of utilization of information channels reveal that "group discussion" was ranked first by the farmers with

the mean score 2.27, as it was most used by 46 per cent farmers, used by 36 per cent of farmers, less used by 19 per cent farmers and no farmer perceive

as not used. The “group meeting” ranked second with mean score 2.08 where as “television” got third rank with mean score 2.03. It was followed by “radio” (1.89 MS), “news paper” (1.68 MS), “farmers training” (1.59MS), “kisan mela” (1.29 MS), “result and method demonstration”, (1.25 MS), “exhibitions” (1.23 MS), “literature” (1.03 MS), “posters/charts/circulars” (.85 MS). The last rank was awarded to “field day/field visit” (0.43 MS).

The findings revealed that the “group discussion” got the first place in order of preference. This might be due to the reason that in “group discussion” the farmers recognising a common problem exchange and evaluate information and ideas in a effort to solve that problem. Their efforts may be directed towards a better understanding of the problem. Discussion usually occurs in a face to face situation with the exchange being spoken. It is a very simple, easy and readily available channel and hence farmers utilize it more and more.

The “group meeting” was ranked second as meeting is a common practice in farming community to sit together in village yard and discuss about problems and solutions.

The “field day/field visit” was a channel which was least used by the farmers. This might be due to their business or un awareness, about these activities due to very poor publicity resulting in very poor participation of farmers.

CONCLUSION

The sources which were perceived as most utilized by the farmers for information seeking about

farm package of practices were “neighbours”, “private agencies” and “friends”, whereas the least utilized sources by the farmers were “NGOs” and “ATIC”.

The channels which were perceived as most utilized by the farmers for seeking information about farm package of practices were “group discussion”, “group meetings”, “television”, “radio” and “news paper”, whereas the channels which least utilized by the farmers were “field day/field visit” and “posters/charts/circulars”.

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