



Sources of Information Used by Farmers to Get Agricultural Information

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Nanded district of Marathwada region in Maharashtra state. In the age of computer and multimedia, it was felt necessary to study the sources of information used by farmers to get agricultural information. Study revealed that neighbors, friends, relatives, progressive farmers, gramsevak, block development officers and extension agents acted as important sources of information to the respondents. In a nutshell, it can be said that personal contact method was found a best source of information. In the age of computer, still farmers were not found using internet as source of information.

Key words : Contact ,Farmer,Information,Source

With the increasing functional literacy level in rural areas, the sources of information have been showing tremendous impact in changing the agricultural scenario. It is believed that use of information sources has direct impact on active participation of farmers in progressive farming. As it is the age of information, farmers are also showing their inclination towards use of different information sources.

The information communicated through, personnel, group and print media is definitely well organized and easily understandable. Such information can be kept for future reference. Besides this, it has entertainment value, skill orientation, enrichment of knowledge which results into increased production and improved life style. The development of print media as a source of farm information has given birth to a new discipline called agricultural journalism. It is well recognized that mass media as a source of information is major influential factor in the decision making of the farmers. The study was conducted in Nanded district with the following specific objectives.

To study the personal characteristics of farmers and to take an account of the sources of information used by farmers to get agricultural information.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Mugat, Kakadi, Digras, Pathrad, Khadkut and Pimpalgaon of Nanded district of Marathwada region in Maharashtra State were the villages selected for study, during the year 2006-07. Twenty farmers from each village were selected. Thus total sample size comprises 120 respondents. College of Agriculture, Parbhani has been placing students of agriculture for RAWEP programme at Cotton

Research Station (CRS), Nanded. CRS, Nanded placed RAWEP students in selected villages. For this study purposive sampling method was used. Host farmers from above stated villages were selected as respondents. Structured interview schedules have been used for data collection. The data were collected by giving survey work as an extension activity to RAWEP students. In each village four students were placed. In order to get factual data, students were given orientation about all extension activities including survey method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Multifaceted picture of the respondents is given in Table 1. Majority of the respondents have been found in the age group of 31-49 years. The second largest number of respondents is in the age group of 50 and above.

With regard to education, it is found that, out of total sample, 84 respondents 70% could complete their education upto matriculation only, 03 were found illiterate which indicates that illiteracy is not a major obstacle.

With regard to income majority of farmers *i.e.*, 55 (45.83%) were found economically well placed as their income was 2 lakhs and above only, 06 of them were having income upto 25000.

So far as their family pattern and the level of social participation are concerned the facts found give relief as 55 per cent belonged to joint family and 92.5 per cent showed participation in social life.

The Table 2 showed that majority farmers had contacted friends (75 per cent), neighbours (79 per cent), relatives (66 per cent), progressive farmers (74 per cent), Gramsevak (65 per cent) for getting information. This is the sign of healthy relationship among them. Personal contacts they are using as

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their socio-personal characteristics.

N = 120		
Characters	Frequency	Percentage
1) Age		
16-30	15	12.5
31-49	72	60.0
50 & above	33	27.5
2) Education		
illiterate	3	2.5
Upto VII th standard	6	5.0
Upto S.S.C.	84	70.0
Graduate & above	27	22.5
3) Income (in Rupees)		
Upto 25000	6	5.00
26000 to 50000	20	16.67
51000 to 1 lakh	39	32.50
2 lakhs & above	55	45.83
4) Family pattern		
Joint	66	55.00
Nuclear	54	45.00
5) Social Participation		
Yes	111	92.5
No	9	7.5

source of information are more useful and fruitful. Personal contacts, as a source of information *i.e.*, Gramsevak (65 per cent), Block Development Officer (55 per cent), Agricultural Scientist (33 per cent), Agricultural Assistants (35 per cent), respondents were taking benefit of facilities available at government level. It is an indication of increased awareness on the part of progressive farmers, which is visible at grass root level. These findings are inline with findings reported by Darekar and Gholve (2002), Singh (1996) and Thakur *et al.*, (1991).

It is evident from the Table 3 that 95 percent respondents used radio as a first hand source of information. Whereas, 90 per cent respondents observed T.V. as a source of information. It seems that radio and T.V. are the popular sources of information in rural areas as also reported by Kalmegh and Deshpande (1991). Farmers rallies and agricultural exhibitions were attended by 67 per cent and 71 per cent respondents, respectively, to get agricultural information. Again when asked whether they attend these rallies? Their response is that Marathwada Agricultural University. always organize agricultural exhibitions at Parbhani which is on large scale and given wider publicity and farmers attended that exhibition and used as a

source of information. Farmers rallies are also organized by Marathwada Agricultural University and state agricultural department at village level in which farmers participated enthusiastically and used it as source of information.

Only 36.66 per cent respondents have been found using print media *i.e.*, Krishi Diary and 17.5 per cent were using monthly magazines like Sheti bhati. Darekar and Gholve (2002) and Thakur, *et al.*, (1991) also illustrated same results.

It was found that 45.83 per cent respondents attended farmers day programme, 37.5 per cent were inclined towards demonstration. Conduct tours were enjoyed by 58.33 per cent respondents. Meetings like Krishi Vidyan Mandal, Gram Panchayat meetings, Gramswachhita Abhiyan, were attended by 33.33 per cent respondents (Table 4).

Very few respondents participated in conferences. Field experiments on different crop varieties were seen by 36.66 per cent respondents.

It is clear from the above table that farmers are using group contact methods as source of information as also quoted by Darekar and Gholve (2002).

Study conducted on sources of information used by farmers to get agricultural information can be concluded as under. Maximum respondents were

Table 2. Use of personal contacts as source of information

N = 120		
Sources	Frequency	Percentage
Friends	90	75.10
Neighbours	95	79.17
Relatives	80	66.67
Progressive farmers	89	74.17
Local leaders	54	45.00
Gramsevaks	78	65.00
Agricultural Assistants	42	35.00
Extension Officers	33	27.05
Block Development Officers	66	55.00
Agricultural Scientists	40	33.33
Others	10	8.33

Table 3. Use of mass media contacts by farmers as a source of information

N = 120		
Sources	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	114	95.00
Television	108	90.00
Film shows	7	5.83
Farmers rallies	81	67.50
Monthly magazine, Sheti bhati, Shetkari	21	17.50
Krishi Diary	44	36.67
Agricultural exhibition	85	70.83
Agricultural campaigns	30	25.00
Internet	00	00

Table 4. Use of group contact methods by farmers as a source of information

N = 120		
Sources	Frequency	Percentage
Demonstrations	45	37.50
Meetings	40	33.33
Group discussion	35	29.17
Farmers day	55	45.83
Conferences	10	8.30
Conducted tours	70	58.33
Field experiments	44	36.67

in the age group of 31-49 years. In respect of education, majority respondents belonged to secondary level of education. Farmers had used neighbours, friends, relatives, progressive farmers, gram sevaks, block development officers and agricultural assistants as a source of information, it is a sign of sound personal contacts. Regarding mass media contacts, radio, television, farmers rallies, agricultural exhibitions were the most preferred sources of information. Group contact methods as a source of information used by farmers were conducted tours, demonstrations, meetings, farmers days, field experiments. So, it can be said that, in the age of information, farmers were well aware of agricultural information and sources of information. It is positive result of extension agencies working in the field of extension services.

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