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RESEARCH PAPER

A Study on Agricultural Information Source Utilization Pattern by the Farmers of Lakhimpur District in Assam

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to assess the Agricultural information sources utilization pattern of farmers of Lakhimpur District of Assam. A total of 247 farmers were selected through multi-stage sampling design. Structured questionnaire was used for collection of data. The collected data was analyzed by using latest version of MS Excel. Simple Percentage system and scaling system like rating scales and rank order scales have been used as statistical procedures. Information source utilization by majority of the respondents was medium. Progressive farmers were the most frequently used informal source of information for them, followed by neighbours, family members, friends/relatives, and local leaders. The most useful source of formal agricultural information sources to farmers were ATMA personnel, followed by ADO, AEA, KVK, input dealers and marketing officials. The majority of farmers were found to be using the internet, followed by mobile phones, TV, newspaper, radio, agricultural literature and demonstrations for information as mass media information sources.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The study highlights that farmers in Lakhimpur district predominantly rely on interpersonal sources like extension personnel and fellow farmers for agricultural information. Mass media and ICT tools were underutilized, indicating a gap and potential for strengthening digital extension services.

Keywords: Information sources, Utilization pattern, farmers

Effective communication from different sources plays a vital role in providing knowledge and information for rural poor and rural farmers to modify their behaviour in ways that provides sustainable benefit to them as well as to society. There are many agricultural information sources from which provides relevant information and knowledge to farmers.

METHODOLOGY

Ex-post facto research design was followed for carrying out the study. The Lakhimpur District of Assam was selected purposively for the study as investigator hails from the district and Livelihoods of farmers of that district are heavily affected for coping with the situation they need more information. District having 13 ADO circle and all 13 ADO circle were selected and

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from each ADO circle 19 farmers were selected. Thus, a total of 247 farmers were selected for the study. Based on class interval the obtained scores distributed into three categories namely Regularly, Sometime and Never corresponding frequencies and percentages were recorded. The total score of all respondents was arrived by multiplying the frequency of responses under each of statement of information source with corresponding weightage. The mean score of each statement of information source was arrived from dividing total score with number of respondents and sub items under information source were ranked based on mean scores. Average mean score was arrived from summing up of all mean scores and divided with number of statements in a particular information source.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion of utilisation of information sources was presented below:

Table 1: Distribution of the farmers based on their agricultural information source utilization pattern

Category	Score range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	< 10.91	32	12.96%
Medium	10.91-18.43	173	70.04%
High	>18.43	42	17.00%
Total	**247 100.00**		
Mean	14.67		
S. D	3.76		

Table 2: Ranking order of statements of agricultural information source utilisation of the farmers

Information source	Frequency and Percentage (%)			TS	WMS	Rank
	Regularly	Sometime	Never			
Informal Source						
Family member	57(23.08%)	122(49.39%)	68(27.53%)	232	0.94	III
Progressive Farmers	35(14.17%)	170(68.83%)	42(17.00%)	240	0.97	I
Neighbours	36(14.57%)	167(67.61%)	44(17.82%)	239	0.96	II
Friends/Relatives	37(14.98%)	136(55.06%)	74(29.96%)	210	0.85	IV
Local leader	0(0.00%)	68(27.53%)	179(72.47%)	68	0.28	V
Average WMS			**1.18**			
Formal Source						
AEA	32(12.96%)	163(65.99%)	52(21.06%)	227	0.92	III
ATMA Personnel	25(10.12%)	192(77.73%)	30(12.15)	242	0.98	I
ADO	41(16.60%)	155(62.75%)	51(20.65%)	237	0.95	II
KVK	42(17.00%)	55(22.27%)	150(60.73%)	139	0.56	IV
Marketing officials	0(0.00%)	8(3.24%)	239(96.76%)	8	0.03	VI
Input Dealer	18(7.29%)	82(33.20%)	147(59.51%)	118	0.48	V
Average WMS			**0.65**			
Mass Media						
Newspaper	48(19.43%)	128(51.82%)	71(28.75%)	224	0.90	IV
Radio	20(8.09%)	158(63.97%)	69(27.94%)	198	0.80	V
Internet	106(42.91%)	106(42.91%)	35(14.17%)	318	1.28	II
TV	85(34.41%)	121(48.99%)	41(16.60%)	291	1.17	III
Mobile Phone	105(42.51%)	118(47.77%)	24(9.72%)	328	1.33	I
Agril literature	6(2.43%)	93(37.65%)	148(59.92%)	105	0.42	VII
Exhibition	2(0.81%)	128(51.82%)	117(47.37%)	132	0.53	VI
Demonstration	0(0.00%)	61(24.70%)	186(75.30%)	61	0.246	VIII
			0.83			

Table 3: Ranking order of sources of information based on average mean score

Sl. No.	Sources	Average mean score	Rank
1	Informal	1.18	I
2	Formal	0.65	III
3	Mass Media	0.83	II

Informal sources category

Out of all the information sources, informal sources were ranked high followed by mass media and formal sources. Among all the informal sources available to farmers were progressive farmers followed by neighbours, family member, friends/relatives and local leader were the utilized sources in order of ranking. This was due to higher awareness and knowledge of progressive farmers on new agricultural technologies. Hence farmers were frequently contacted with them.

Formal source category

Among the all-formal agricultural information sources available to farmers mostly utilized source were ATMA personnel followed by ADO, AEA, KVK, input dealers and marketing officials in the order of ranking. This was due to ATMA personnel, ADO and AEA were grass root level workers working closely with the farmers so they were regarded to be trustworthy hence contacted them for information.

Mass media category

The utility of mass media as source of agricultural information was high. The source of information were newspaper, TV, radio, internet, mobile phone, Agri. Literature, exhibition and demonstration. Majority of the farmers used internet followed by mobile phone, TV, newspaper, radio exhibition, Agri. Literature and demonstration in the order of ranking.

CONCLUSION

Progressive farmers, neighbours & friends were highly utilized informal sources of agricultural information. So, it is suggested that these sources should be utilized in the research area to enhance communication effectiveness & efficiency. Agricultural department and ATMA personnel were the most utilized formal sources. So, the government should take the initiative of increasing the extensionists to farmer ratio for the benefit of farmer. Mobile phone, Internet and Television were the most preferred impersonal cosmopolite channels. So, it is advised to state agricultural universities and government officials to give importance to these channels during the dissemination and diffusion of newer technologies in agriculture in order to enhance and outreach efforts to farmers.

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