Indian Journal of Extension Education
Vol. 51, No. 3 & 4, 2015 (139-141)

Critical Analysis of Information Sources and Channels Preferred by Vegetable Growers of Haryana.

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in 2014-15 to study the rapidity, utilization and credibility pattern of information sources and channels by the vegetable growers in Haryana. The 160 vegetable growers from four districts of Haryana were interviewed. The study reported that personal localite sources like neighbours, friends, progressive and opinion farmers were playing important role in transfer of vegetable production technologies to the vegetable growers. These sources with high credibility were widely used by majority of the respondents. While SMS and Scientists were perceived as most rapid source of information for transfer of technology. The most revealing finding of the study is that ADO/BAO had lost their credibility among the farmers while the input suppliers and agents of commercial seed, fertilizers, plant protection, etc., played a critical role in information network of vegetable growers , however their credibility is low. It was important to note that scientists and SMSs were perceived a much credible source of information by farmers, however these sources were less accessible to the farmers. Further, the increasing literacy rate and easy accessibility of the mass media channels resulted in increased utilization of these media by the farmers.

Key words: Information sources and channels; vegetable growers; credibility;

INTRODUCTION

Vegetables play an important role in balance diet. Haryana occupy a prime position among the states in total vegetable production of India. A number of technical information or innovations for increasing vegetable production and productivity have been generated by the research system. The farmers have adopted some of them but still there are many, which have not reached to the farmers. An important pre-requisite for the adoption and diffusion of an innovation within a social system is the effective communication of information relating to the innovation involved. In this context, the sources and channels of information utilized by farmers play an important role. Indian farmers have their own information networks where they continuously interact to get the information about agriculture and to get the solution of their problems. A farmer relies on a few information sources and rejects many others. Therefore, it is necessary to identify different sources and channels of agriculture information available to the vegetable growing farmers and to locate the most utilized sources and channels so as to develop a suitable communication strategy. The utilization of sources and channels may vary from region to region and crop to crop. No study has been done to identify the information sources and channels utilized by vegetable growing farmers in Haryana. Identification of these information sources and channels, their utilization pattern and their credibility, rapidity perceived by the vegetable grower farmers will be helpful for extension agencies and personnel engaged in transfer of technology programmes in selecting appropriate information sources and channels for effective and rapid transfer of new agriculture technologies. The present study was undertaken with the objectives to study the credibility, rapidity and utilization pattern of information sources and channels used by vegetable growing farmers in Haryana.

METHODOLOGY

The data were collected through personal interview techniques with a structured schedule prepared for the present investigation. To measure the extent of utilization, the respondents were asked to state the extent of utilization of available sources and channels of agricultural information on a three point continuum scale *viz.*, always, sometimes and never by assigning 3, 2 and 1 score, respectively. The credibility of information sources and channels were also measured on three point continuum *viz.*, most credible, somewhat credible and not credible with weighted score 3, 2 and 1, respectively. Similarly for measuring rapidity the farmers were asked to respond on three point continuum scale of most rapid, rapid and somewhat rapid and score of 3, 2, 1 were

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assigned respectively. Total weighted scores (TWS) were calculated with respect to individual sources and channel and as such were put in the order of priority.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Credibility, Rapidity and Utilization pattern of information sources and channels by vegetable growers

a. Credibility, Rapidity and Utilization pattern of information sources : It was observed that most utilized were showing low credibility among the vegetable growers. While rapidity in transfer of technology depended on the technical knowledge of the information sources.

The Data presented in table 1 revealed that the SMSs and scientists though were very high on credibility scale (TWS 239) but they were not easy to approach for information due to inaccessibility (TWS 152), while the agricultural input suppliers were the highly utilized information sources (TWS 244) because of easy accessibility but had low credibility (TWS 78) due to the lack of scientific knowledge. But on rapidity scale these sources of information were high ranks orders as SMSs and Scientist, ADO/BAO and Agri. Input suppliers, respectively. Similar results were observed by Khan *et al.* (2011) and Verma *et al.* (2014).

Table 1: Credibility, Rapidity and Utilization pattern of information sources by vegetable growers

Information Sources	Credibility (TWS)	Ranks	Rapidity (TWS)	Ranks	Utilization (TWS)	Ranks
ADO/BAO	172	V	222	II	104	VII
SMS' and scientists	239	I	244	I	152	VI
Professional leaders	48	X	63	VIII	174	V
Farmers organizations/ cooperatives	140	VI	82	VII	76	VIII
Progressive farmers and opinion farmers	184	IV	192	IV	232	IV
Neighbourers and fellow farmers	221	II	42	X	274	I
Relatives & friends	212	III	56	IX	261	II
Agri. input suppliers	78	VIII	202	III	244	III
Agricultural consultants	51	IX	147	V	57	IX
Personnels of NGO's	104	VII	116	VI	42	X

It was also revealed that the personal localite sources like, progressive farmers and opinion farmers were still widely used (TWS 184) and was the fourth most credible and utilized sources of information required in the vegetable cultivation technology. Similarly neighbours and fellow farmers were highly credible (TWS 221)and most utilized (TWS 274)but they were perceived as least rapid source(TWS 42) due to low technical knowledge. Similar results were observed by Pal *et al.* (2009), Baldeo Singh *et al.* (2011) and Khan *et al.* (2011).

Data in table 1 also received that credibility, rapidity and utilization of farmers organization/ co-operatives were poor which ranked sixth, seventh and eighth, ranks respectively. There was poor utilization (TWS 42) and credibility (TWS 104) of NGOs as a source of information regarding vegetable production technologies. The reasons might be that the activities of NGOs in the area under study were related to rural development activities, other income generating sources, soil and water conservation, literacy, women child welfare and less consideration was given to vegetable production improvement strategies. But they were perceived as fairly rapid source of information and technology transfer by vegetable growers. In case of agricultural consultant the results were poor for all the three parameters due lower presence in vegetable production in the study area.

(b) Credibility, rapidity and utilization pattern of information channels : Table 2 showed that among mass media channels studied cell phone was perceived as most rapid (TWS 256) channel of information by the vegetable growers. The credibility and utilization of cell phone were also high among the vegetable growers and it was on second and third rank orders, respectively. The use of mobile cell phone has been increasing among the farming community. Their utilization for information dissemination should be done to a large extent. Presently, cell phone was utilized by some of the respondents to receive short service messages (SMSs), pre-recorded voice calls for weather forecasting and early disease and pest warning alerts. But the focus of these message was majorly on cereals and pulses, little attention was given to vegetable crops. The vegetable crops should also be emphasized in this aspect. The findings of the present study agree with the findings of Verma *et al.* (2013).

The other mass media channels like television and radio were perceived rapid and effective in delivering of information by the respondents. On credibility scale, television was at first position (TWS 248) but it was utilized or viewed to a lesser extent for getting agricultural information. This could be due to fewer programmes featuring on agriculture aspect and more emphasis given on entertainment aspect.

So, if specially devoted television broadcasting channels are brought under the university or other extension agency its will increase the speed of diffusion of information. The community radio services of KVK were also heard by the vegetable growers. Similar finding were reported by Sharma *et al.* (2008), Singh *et al.* (2011), Khan *et al.* (2011) and Godara and Bhimawat (2012).

Table 2: Credibility, Rapidity and Utilization pattern of information channels by vegetable growers

Information Channels	Credibility (TWS)	Ranks	Rapidity (TWS)	Ranks	Utilization (TWS)	Ranks
Television	248	I	253	II	175	V
Radio	193	IV	231	III	156	VI
Cell phones (SMS, Voice calls, etc.)	231	II	256	I	233	III
Agricultural column in news papers	210	III	201	IV	245	II
Farm publications	156	V	129	VII	62	X
Result demonstrations	106	VII	55	X	75	IX
Tour/field visit/field days	87	VIII	48	XI	117	VIII
Group discussions /meetings	46	X	137	VI	252	I
Trainings	138	VI	64	IX	59	XI
Exhibitions	74	IX	92	VIII	140	VII
Printed materials of private agencies.	42	XI	174	V	212	IV

The increasing literacy and easy accessibility of news paper in Hindi in the villages was making the agriculture news in newspapers as important channel of information. It can be observed that respondents perceived agricultural news papers as fourth most rapid channel (TWS 201) with high credibility (TWS 210) and utilization (TWS 245) at third and second ranks, respectively. Similar was the case with the print media like farm publication and printed material of private agencies. But in case of printed material of private agencies from private seed companies, fertilizer companies, *etc.* vegetable growers perceived it least credible (TWS 42) and their availability and utilization (TWS 212) were high through agricultural input supplier in the village. Farm publications in the form of leaflets, booklets, periodicals circulars, *etc.* were useful tools for creating awareness about recommended package of practices of vegetable crops. These findings are in conformity with the findings of Sharma *et al.* (2008), Godara and Bhimawat (2012) and Verma *et al.* (2014).

CONCLUSIONS

In India, ADO/BAO is the key source of agriculture information for the farmers at block and village level. But it is inferred from the study that, this source of information is loosing credibility among the farmers due to less frequent visit and incomplete information available with them. The easy accessibility of agri-input suppliers made the farmers to widely use them but the lack of scientific and systematic knowledge among agri-input suppliers placed them at low credibility level by the vegetable growers. It was also observed that there was limited attendance and participation by farmers to result demonstration, tours, field trip, field day, meetings and training related to vegetable production technologies. While use of mass media by the vegetable growing farmers are increasing day by day. To enhance the rate of adoption of recommended vegetable production technologies by making the different information sources and channels more effective, the necessary steps should be taken.

Paper received on : March 17, 2015
Accepted on : April 4,2015

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