



Gain in Knowledge of Member Farmers Through “Chokhi- Kheti” Farm News Letter

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The study was conducted in three districts of Rajasthan namely Bharatpur, Bikaner and Sawai Madhopur'. Six Panchayat Samities viz Lunkaransar, Bikaner, Kumher, Sewar, Khandar, and Choth Ka Barwara were selected. All the farmers who were members of “Chokhi-Kheti” in these panchayat samities were selected for the study. The findings revealed that less use of illustrations, appropriate use of technical words, appropriate size of letters, fair quality of printing, attractive cover page, less number of pages and up-to-date information were important features of “Chokhi-Kheti” as reported by majority of farmers. The finding also indicated that majority of members gained medium knowledge through “Chokhi-Kheti”. Out of sixteen independent variables, five variables were found non-significantly associated with gain in knowledge these were size of land holding, farm power, irrigation potential, social and extension participation. The other variables viz age, education, mass-media exposure, scientific orientation, risk preference, economic motivation, attitude towards “Chokhi-Kheti”, level of aspiration, annual income, reading behaviour and attitude towards trust worthy information were found to have significantly associated with gain in knowledge of members farmer through the farm news letter “Chokhi- Kheti”.

Key words: Mass Media, Knowledge, News letter, ICT, Independent - variables.

Farm publications including farm news letter promote knowledge by providing improved agricultural information to farmers at their door steps. It is a low cost media and can reach large number of people in a short time. The farm news letters are popular in communicating modern technologies to the farmers by virtue of their publication at regular intervals

To explore vast potential of farm news letter in disseminating agricultural technology, Swami Keshwanand Rajasthan Agricultural University (SKRAU), Bikaner initiated publication of a farm news letter “Chokhi-Kheti” in Hindi language in February 2002. It is a monthly news letter and sent to around 1750 subscribers through mail in various districts of Rajasthan and adjoining states like Haryana, M.P., U.P. and Delhi. It contains scientific articles on agriculture and allied fields like home science, animal husbandry, agricultural engineering, etc.

It is presumed that individuals who read farm news letter gain more knowledge about agricultural technology. But how far such farm news letters are actually read by readers and up-to what extent readers have gained knowledge remain unknown. Keeping this view in mind the present study was carried out with the following specific objectives:

- (1) To study the perception of member farmers about the monthly farm news letter “Chokhi-Kheti”.
- (2) To measure the gain in knowledge through “Chokhi-Kheti” by the member farmers about agricultural technologies
- (3) To find out the association between selected characteristics of the member farmers with their gain in knowledge through “Chokhi-Kheti”.

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in Bikaner, Bharatpur and Sawai Madhopur districts of Rajasthan. These districts were selected purposively on the basis of higher number of subscribers of “Chokhi-Kheti”. Out of these districts two panchayat samities were selected from each district on the basis of higher number of subscribers of “Chokhi- Kheti”. This following six panchyat samities were selected for the study viz Lunkaransar and Bikaner, from Bikaner district, Kumher and Sewar from Bharatpur and Khandar and Choth ka Barwara from Sawai Madhopur district. All the farmers who were subscribers of “Chokhi-Kheti” in the these panchayat samities were selected for the study as respondents. In all 105 subscribers were selected as respondents for the study purpose. All the respondents were enrolled as a members of “Chokhi- Kheti” before Feb.2010. All the 12 issues

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published from January 2009 to December 2009 were considered for finding out gain in knowledge.

A suitable knowledge test was developed and used to measure gain in knowledge of the member farmers. For this, initially 79 items were collected from 12 selected issues of "Chokhi-Kheti". After discussion with experts, finally 67 items covering recommended package of practices of summer groundnut, pearl millet, gram, wheat, mustard and vegetable, forage crops, irrigation management, fertilizer application, plant protection measures, livestock management and home management were selected to test gain in knowledge. The data were collected through mailed questionnaire, one and zero scores were given to every correct and incorrect answer respectively. The data were analyzed by using mean, percentage, standard deviation, coefficient of correlation and path analysis.

Results and Discussion

Subscribers reaction towards 'Chokhi- Kheti'

The data presented in Table 1 reveals that 87.62 per cent of subscribers were of the view that appropriate size of letters were used in printing of "Chokhi- Kheti", followed 86.67 per cent reported

Table 1. Reactions of subscribers towards 'Chokhi-Kheti' news letter (n = 105)

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
Language		
i. Simple	86	81.91
ii. Somewhat difficult	10	9.52
iii. Difficult	9	8.58
Illustration		
i. Less	91	86.67
ii. Sufficient	10	9.52
iii More	4	3.81
Technical words		
i. Appropriate	79	75.24
ii. Less	11	10.47
iii. More	15	14.29
Letter Size		
i. Small	13	12.38
ii. Appropriate	92	87.62
Printing Quality		
i. Good	19	18.10
ii. Fair	68	64.76
iii. Poor	18	17.14
Attractiveness		
i. Attractive	54	51.42
ii. Somewhat attractive	32	30.48
iii. Not attractive	19	18.10
Usefulness		
i. Useful	57	54.29
ii. Less useful	36	34.29
iii. Not useful	12	11.42
Level of interest		
i. Interesting	52	49.52
ii. Somewhat interesting	37	35.24
iii. Not interesting	16	15.24
No. of Pages		
i. Less	66	62.86
ii. Sufficient	28	26.67
iii. More	11	10.47
Timeliness of Information		
i. Up to date	47	44.77
ii. Somewhat up to date	40	38.09
iii. Out dated	18	17.14

that less number of illustrations appeared in the news letter. language used was simple, (81.91%) use of appropriate technical words (75.24%) and fair quality of printing. Other characters like, less number of pages (62.86%), useful information (54.29%), attractive cover page (51.42%), interesting presentation (49.52%), timeliness as up-date information (44.77%) where also expressed by the submission.

This may be due to the reasons that the appropriate size of letters ,simple language, appropriate technical words were used in publication of " Chokhi-Kheti " to improve the visibility of the content and to make the message more understandable. The fair quality of printing was due its printing by private press approved by the University. This news letter is being published in black and white and number of pages were also restricted to eight, and that is why less number of illustrations were used with limited number of pages. Most of the articles were written by senior faculty members keeping in view the interests and needs of the farmer, this may be the reason that farmers to be found "Chokhi-Kheti" attractive, useful, interesting and timely.

The findings are in accordance with the findings reported by Joshi (1993), Natikar et. al .(1995), Nain (2003) and Rahtore and Trikkha (2010).

Gain in knowledge by the member farmers

It is clear from the data in Table 2 that majority of the member farmers (60.95%) gained medium knowledge. However, 26.67 and 12.38 per cent of the farmers gained high and low Level knowledge respectively through "Chokhi Kheti".

Table 2. Distribution of farmer members according to gain in knowledge through "Chokhi-Khet" n = 105

Gain in knowledge	Number	Percent
Low	13	12.38
Medium	64	60.95
High	28	26.67

Mean = 49.29 score S.D. = 6.97 score

This may be due to the reason that contents of the news letter where perceived as useful, timely and interesting by the subscribers. The message is also presented in simple language with appropriate technical words and letter size, to makes the message easily understandable.

The findings are in conformity with the findings of Ramkumar and Pushkaran (1990) and Hingu and Patel (1998).

Association of independent variables with gain in knowledge by the respondents.

The data in Table 3 show that the independent variables viz., education, annual income, level of aspiration, economic motivation, scientific orientation, risk preference, attitude towards 'Chokhi-Kheti', mass-media exposure, attitude towards trustworthy information and reading behaviour of the member farmers were positively and significantly associated

Table 3. Association between selected independent variables with gain in knowledge of member farmers through "Chokhi-Kheti" (n=105)

Independent Variables	'r' value with gain in knowledge
Age	- 0.2431*
Education	0.5714*
Land holding	0.13125 NS
Farm power	- 0.06849 NS
Mass media exposure	0.29420
Irrigation potential	0.1207 NS
Scientific orientation	0.4712*
Risk preference	0.3389*
Social participation	0.05839 NS
Economic motivation	0.3123*
Attitude towards 'Chokhi-Kheti'	0.2821*
Extension participation	- 0.01112NS
Level of aspiration	0.3463*
Annual Income	0.1934*
Reading behaviour	0.2143*
Attitude towards trust worthy information	0.38704*

*Significant at 1 per cent level of probability
NS = Non-significant

with gain in knowledge. Whereas, age was negatively and non-significantly associated with it. On the other hand the variables like social participation, land holding, irrigation potential, animal possessed and extension participation were non-significantly associated with gain in knowledge.

Table 4. Path Co-efficient of the independent variables with gain in knowledge of farmer members

No. Variables	Direct effect	Total indirect effect	Substantial indirect effect through	
			1	2
X ₁ Age	- 0.1489	0.0723	- 0.532 _(0.00)	- 0.556 _(0.00)
X ₂ Education	0.4232	0.1623	0.1170 _(0.00)	-0.0692 _(0.00)
X ₃ Annual Income	0.0016	0.1913	0.1374 _(0.00)	0.0609 _(0.00)
X ₄ Level of Aspiration	0.0866	0.2553	0.2000 _(0.00)	0.0403 _(0.00)
X ₅ Economic motivation	-0.1527	0.4639	0.1910 _(0.00)	0.1632 _(0.00)
X ₆ Scientific orientation	0.2254	0.2316	0.2232 _(0.00)	-0.1103 _(0.00)
X ₇ Risk preference	-0.0200	0.3610	0.1941 _(0.00)	0.1709 _(0.00)
X ₈ Attitude towards 'Chokhi-Kheti'	0.1717	0.1106	0.0775 _(0.00)	0.0746 _(0.00)
X ₉ Mass media exposure	0.471	0.2368	0.1566 _(0.00)	0.0589 _(0.00)
X ₁₀ Reading behaviour	0.1440	0.0761	0.0343 _(0.00)	0.0217 _(0.00)

Gain in knowledge by path analysis

It is observed from Table 4 that education exerted the highest direct positive effect on gain in knowledge as the path coefficient was 0.4232, followed by scientific orientation (0.2254).

As far as the total indirect effect was concerned, economic motivation had the highest positive indirect effect (0.4639) on gain in knowledge followed by risk bearing ability (0.3610). Scientific orientation exerted highest positive first order substantial indirect effect (0.2232) on gain in knowledge through education followed by level of aspiration (0.2000) through education. The second order largest positive substantial indirect effect was exerted by risk preference (0.1709) through scientific orientation followed by economic motivation (0.1632).

The study on gain in knowledge of member farmers through "Chokhi-Kheti" revealed that majority of member farmers gained medium knowledge through this news letter. The independent variables like age, education, annual income, level of aspiration, economic motivation, scientific orientation, risk preference, attitude towards "Chokhi-Kheti", mass-media exposure, attitude towards trust worthy information and reading behaviour were positively associated with gain in knowledge.

It is suggested that while writing for farmers more number of illustrations should be used to make the messages easily understandable. The language should be simple, preferably in local dialects with appropriate technical words and font size. The over page may also be made more attractive. The extension worker should try to accelerate and manipulate the psychological variables like level of aspiration, economic motivation, scientific orientation, risk preference, attitude towards farm news letter, attitude towards trust worthy information while working with the farming community as these traits have influenced the process of gain in knowledge.

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