

Reading Habit of Farm News by Farmers of Thanjavur District

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ABSTRACT

An ex post facto study was conducted in the selected blocks of Intensive Agricultural District Programme, district of Thanjavur to know the characteristics of farmers who read agricultural news articles published in newspaper "Dinamani". The study revealed that agricultural articles were read by 76.7 per cent of the respondents. Only the socioeconomic factor, occupational difference had significantly influenced the reading of agricultural articles.

INTRODUCTION

Newspaper is one of the most important mass media of communication having the quality of conveying a message quickly to a large number of people at a relatively low cost. Moreover, farmers can read agricultural articles at a convenient time and also preserve if need be. Hoffer (1946) reported that 60 per cent of the farmers-sampling used newspaper. Lionberger (1951) found that low income farmers reported newspapers and farm journals as the most important sources. Baker (1955) found that farmers having some high school education made greater use of bulletin, county agents, magazines or newspapers. Knox (1961) found that four out of five receive the major daily newspaper in that area. Three out of five read extension items. Rahudkar (1962) found that farmers of high socioeconomic status obtained information from magazines and newspapers. Schramm (1965) stated that the

amount of news reading tends to increase with age, education and economic status. He further elaborated that news reading increases very rapidly through the teens, reaches a peak somewhere between the ages of thirty and fifty and thereafter drops off slightly. Accordingly to Rahudkar (1967), 33 per cent of farmers read newspaper giving farm information. He also found that more young farmers below 29 reported mass media as the main source of information on farm matters than did the middle aged or old farmers. He also found that more use of mass media was made by trader caste, business oriented farmers than other farmers. Lakshmanan and Satyanarayana (1969) have stated aged farmers used mostly mass media (21.7 per cent) along with other sources. The present study was taken up to identify readers of farm news and also to find out the reasons for selecting this as one of the media of communication.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in I. A. D. P. district of Thanjavur where the newspaper, "Dinamani" had been fully utilized by the agricultural information unit of I. A. D. P. to pass the know-how of the fast changing agricultural technology. Multi-stage random sampling technique was employed to select the samples. Thanjavur district was divided into two divisions i. e., old delta and new delta and in each division according to the highest number of circulation of the daily, one block was fixed finally and according to agents' circulation list proportionate sampling was done. One hundred and twenty respondents were selected for the study. Since the entire study was on qualitative characters, chi-square test of independence was employed to all the attributes to find out the significance. Scoring technique was employed for ranking the attributes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Newspaper gives information on various items like political, economical, social and sports activities either of a state, nation or nations. In the present study it was attempted to find out whether the farmers have taken up newspaper because it gives preference to agriculture.

From the Table 1, it is observed that the farmers were generally interested in political news within the country as well as from countries outside. They had given third preference for farm news. However, 10 per cent gave first preference and 63 per cent third preference.

Table 1. Reading habit through newspaper

Name of news item	Score value	Percentage
News within the country	450	31.5
News abroad	333	23.2
Farm news	300	21.0
Market prices	185	12.5
Editor's report	165	11.8

Of the total sample taken 76.7 per cent read agricultural articles published in the newspaper "Dinamani". This finding is in agreement with the view of Knox (1961). The influence of personal and situational factors on reading of agricultural news articles are detailed in Table 2.

The study revealed that there was a high percentage of readers of news paper in the middle age group followed by old age group with young age group as the last. With regard to reading of agricultural articles 70 per cent of farmers of old age group read agricultural articles followed by young group (66.66 per cent) and the middle age group (52.34 per cent). This finding is in agreement with those of Lakshmananna and Satyanarayana (1969). However, reading of agricultural articles was independent of age in this study. The different levels of education had not influenced the reading of agricultural articles because the articles were in a simple language and in a popular style so that even the farmers of very low education could read them without difficulty. Income level, farm

Table 2. Differential characteristics Vs Agricultural news articles reading

Category	Total res-pondents	Readers of Agri. articles	Percent-age	X ² value
I Age				
a. Young	12	8	66.67	3.031 NS
b. Middle aged	68	56	52.34	
c. Old	40	28	70.00	
II Education				
a. Primary education	40	29	72.50	0.863 NS
b. Secondary education	75	59	78.66	
c. College education	5	4	80.00	
III Farm Income				
a. Low income	53	40	75.5	0.5405 NS
b. Medium income	48	38	79.00	
c. High income	19	14	74.00	
IV Farm size				
a. Small	39	31	79.50	4.896 NS
b. Medium	42	26	61.90	
c. Large	39	35	89.75	
V Occupation				
a. Part-time agriculturists	74	52	70.30	4.896*
b. Full-time agriculturists	46	40	80.70	

size also do not have any significant influence over reading of agricultural articles. The Table 2 shows that more number of full-time agriculturists read agricultural news articles than part-time agriculturists. This is a clear evidence to show that part-time agriculturists did not devote their attention to the reading of agricultural articles.

The findings of Radhukar (1967) is in consonance with this finding.

The farmers know about agricultural innovation through various sources of communication. The preference of farmers to different sources are as follows.

It is seen that newspaper ranked third as a source of information. The

Table 3. Persuasive power of the media

Extension methods	Scores obtained	Percentage
Personal contact	550	23.3
Demonstration	465	19.3
Newspaper	332	13.9
Radio	315	13.4
Indirect method	251	10.5
Leaflets and folders	210	8.8
Group meeting	188	7.9
Exhibitions	28	1.2
Film show	27	1.1
Training camps	14	0.6

individual or personal contact ranked first followed by face to face contact, so the newspaper is less persuasive.

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