

Utilization of Sources of Information by Small Farmers

By

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ABSTRACT

Small farmers form 62 per cent of total agriculturists. The study reveals that they utilize (informal sources) neighbours to a greater extent as compared to (formal sources) village level worker. The extension worker should contact the small farmers so as to achieve self sufficiency at a faster rate.

INTRODUCTION

Farmers' preference and selectivity for a source may vary with subject matter, stages in the adoption process as well as the characteristics of farmers themselves. Jha and Singh (1966) reported that small farmers largely depend on institutionalized (informal) sources. In the present study, the sources utilized by small farmers for adoption of high yielding varieties of rice were studied in relation to farmers' characteristics.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the year 1971-72 in Mohanur block of Salem district. Small farmers growing rice were identified and the sample (86) was drawn at random. The study was conducted through interview schedule and limited to high yielding varieties of rice. The sources of information were divided into three categories i. e. formal, informal and mass media. Formal sources comprised of village

level worker, Deputy Agricultural Officer, Block Development Officer, Co-operatives, Panchyat and fertilizer/seed agencies. The informal sources comprised of neighbours, relatives and local leaders. Mass media included news papers, radio and written publication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sources utilized: Small farmers were requested to rank the different sources utilized by them in the order of preferences.

Small farmers mostly utilized informal sources. The formal sources ranked last (Table 1). Among informal sources neighbours were utilized to the maximum. So also radio ranked first in the case of mass media and village level worker in the case of formal sources. This shows that the extension workers have neglected the small farmers. The findings of Date (1957) and Jha and Singh (1966) support the findings of the study.

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Table 1. Utilization of sources of information

Name of source	Respondents
Informal sources	
Neighbours	29
Relatives	3
Local leaders	3
	35
Mass Media	
Radio	26
Written publication	2
News paper	1
	29
Formal sources	
Village level worker	15
Deputy Agricultural Officer	5
Fertilizer/Seed agencies	2
	22

Influence of socio-economic factors on utilization of sources.

Even the small farmers, vary in the characteristics like age, education, income and social participation. These characteristics may also have a bearing on the selectivity and preference for a particular source. The relationship between the personal characteristics and utilization are as detailed in Table. 2

The relationship between utilization of sources of farm information and ages of the farmers was found to be

Table 2. Utilization of sources Vs. socio-economic factors

Socio-economic factors	Sources of information				X ² value
	Sources of information Formal	Informal	Mass Media	Total	
Age					
a. Young	5	6	7	18	Less than 1 N.S
b. Middle aged	15	20	20	55	
c. Old	2	9	2	13	
	22	35	29	86	
Education					
a. Illiterate	—	12	3	15	21.009**
b. Primary	14	20	12	46	
c. Secondary	8	3	14	25	
	22	35	29	86	
Income					
a. Low	4	12	7	23	Less than 1 NS
b. Middle	12	19	16	47	
c. High	6	4	6	16	
	22	35	29	86	
Social participation					
a. Participant	14	5	9	28	15.029**
b. Non-participant	8	30	20	56	
	22	35	29	86	

non significant. The increase in education has increased the contact with mass media and reduced the contact

with informal sources. The statistical test proved that there is association between education and utilization of sources. This is supported by the findings of Wilson and Gallup (1955), Coughenour (1955) and Jha and Singh (1966). Though the increase in income has reduced the contact with informal sources, there is no significant influence. Social participants utilized formal sources to a greater extent compared to non participants. There is significant relationship between social participation and utilization of sources.

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