

Communication Behaviour of Small Farmers in a Progressive and Less Progressive Village

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The small farmers of the progressive village gave high credibility to personal cosmopolitan source while the small farmers of the less progressive village gave high credibility to personal localite sources. The credibility of mass media was more or less the same among small farmers of both types of villages. The Village level workers occupied a key position in the communication net work in the progressive village whereas neighbours and friends occupied the key position in less progressive village.

It is recognised that unless diffusion strategy keeps pace with the progress of agricultural research, there is every chance of the new findings not being availed of by the farmers. Thus communication becomes a sine-qua-non for the adoption of innovations. It becomes therefore very necessary to study the communication behaviour of the small farmers to enable the extension workers to plan their communication strategy. Studies were made to find out (i) the extent of utilization of various sources of information by small farmers in the adoption of improved practices of high yielding varieties paddy, (ii) the credibility of different information sources utilized by the small farmers, and (iii) the differential communication behaviour of the small farmers of a progressive and less progressive village.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Gobichettipalayam block of Coimbatore District in which high yielding

varieties paddy were grown on a larger area was selected for this study. Two villages in this block were selected, one progressive and another less progressive based on the extent of cultivation of high yielding varieties in the village, intensity of land use, and extent of area under assured irrigation.

The percentage for the above three items was worked out and added for each village and the villages in the district were arranged in descending order. From this, the village which has got the highest percentage was selected as the progressive village and the one which has the lowest percentage was selected as less progressive village. The criteria used in this study for selecting the progressive and less progressive villages were based on the studies of Singh *et al.* (1972) and Raghudharan *et al.* (1976).

The small farmers in the selected villages were identified as follows: The list of cultivated area under different

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assessment value and the list of cultivators were gathered from the village records. These areas were converted into standard acres applying the guidelines given in the Tamil Nadu Land Reforms Act, 1961. The mean value of the area was calculated for the two selected villages and found to be 1.14 and 0.93 standard acres respectively. The small farmers were identified as those who cultivated an area of 1.14 standard acres and less in the progressive village and 0.93 standard acres and less in the less progressive village. Sixty respondents from the progressive village and 60 from the less progressive village were randomly selected for the study.

Four improved practices for high yielding varieties of paddy namely improved seed, seed treatment, fertilizer schedule and plant protection were selected to study the awareness and adoption of these practices and also the utilization of information sources and channels.

Necessary information was collected from the farmers with the use of an Interview schedule specially prepared for the purpose.

Percentage analysis was used to find out the extent of utilization of different information sources for the adoption of improved practices of paddy.

Credibility Index method was used to study the credibility of different information sources as this method was found the most reliable one by Sandhu (1973).

To find out the differential communication behaviour of the small farmers in the progressive and less progressive villages, the sources and channels were classified into three categories namely personal localite, personal cosmopolite and mass media. The relative credibility index for each source was added and the comparison was made between the progressive and less progressive villages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Utilization of information sources and channels for adoption

The sources and channels consulted in the adoption of the selected improved practices by the small farmers in progressive and less progressive villages are given in Table I.

Village level worker, Deputy Agricultural Officer and campaign were mentioned by 44.64, 17.86 and 10.71 per cent of farmers in the progressive village for the adoption of improved seeds while the most mentioned sources in the less progressive village were neighbours and friends, relatives and village level worker with 42.88, 19.04 and 16.16 per cent respectively.

Utilization of Village Level Worker and Radio was found to be on par for the adoption of seed treatment in the progressive village while neighbours and friends and village level worker were found to be utilized by 42.85 per cent and 28.57 per cent respectively in the less progressive village for the adoption of seed treatment.

TABLE I.

S. Source or No. Channels	Prog. Village								Less Prog. Village							
	Imp. Seed (N=56)		Seed Treat. (N=16)		Fert. Sche. (N=35)		Pl. Prot. (N=32)		Imp. Seed. (N=42)		Seed Treat. (N=7)		Fert. Sche. (N=19)		Plant. prot. (N=11)	
A. Personal localite																
1. Neighbour & Friends																
3	5.36	-	-	1	2.86	2	6.25	18	42.88	3	42.85	8	42.11	3	27.28	
2. Relatives																
2	3.57	2	12.50	2	5.71	1	3.12	8	19.04	-	-	3	15.79	2	18.18	
3. Vill. leaders																
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	18.18	
Total	5	8.93	2	12.50	3	8.57	3	9.37	26	61.92	3	42.85	11	57.90	7	63.64
B. Personal cosmopolite																
1. V. L. W.																
25	44.64	4	25.00	15	42.88	9	28.14	7	16.66	2	28.57	4	21.05	2	18.18	
2. Dy A. O. (Extn)																
10	17.86	2	12.50	7	20.00	14	43.75	2	4.76	-	-	1	5.26	-	-	
3. Dist. Agri. Off.																
-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3.12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total	35	62.50	6	37.50	22	62.88	24	75.01	9	21.42	2	28.57	5	26.31	2	18.18
C. Mass media																
1. Radio																
5	8.93	4	25.00	3	8.56	-	-	1	2.38	-	-	-	-	-	-	
2. Campaign																
6	10.71	1	6.25	4	11.42	2	6.25	2	4.76	1	14.29	2	10.53	-	-	
3. Printed Litr.																
1	1.79	1	6.26	1	2.86	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
4. Demonstration																
4	7.14	2	12.50	2	5.71	2	6.25	4	9.52	1	14.29	1	5.26	2	18.18	
5. News paper																
-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3.12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total	16	28.57	8	50.00	10	28.55	5	15.62	7	16.66	2	28.58	3	15.79	2	18.18
Grand Total	56	100.00	16	100.00	35	100.00	32	100.00	42	100.00	7	100.00	19	100.00	11	100.00

For the adoption of recommended fertilizer schedule the farmers of the progressive village, consulted village level worker (42.88 per cent) followed by Deputy Agricultural Officer (20 per cent) whereas in the case of less progressive village the farmers consulted neighbours and friends (42.11 per cent) followed by village level worker (21.05 per cent.).

Deputy Agricultural officer (43.75 per cent) and Village Level Worker (28.14 per cent) were the most mentioned sources for the adoption of plant protection measures in the progressive village while neighbours and friends (27.28 per cent) were the most mentioned source in the less progressive village.

In general it is seen from Table I that the personal casmopolite sources followed by mass media utilized more by small farmers in the progressive village than in the less progressive village. On the other hand personal localite sources were the most consulted ones for the adoption of the selected package of practices of paddy in the less progressive village.

Credibility of Different Information sources

The farmers were asked to mention the authentic or trustworthy source or sources which were consulted by them before the adoption of improved agricultural practices. The degree of credibility of different information sources is given in Table II.

TABLE II

S. No.	Source or Channel	Progressive village (n=56)		Less progressive village (n=42)	
		Most-least index	Ranks	Most-least index	Ranks
1.	V. L. N.	6.33	I	1.67	V
2.	Radio	4.53	II	0.09	VII
3.	Dy. A. O. (Extn)	3.75	III	0.42	VI
4.	Campaign	3.33	IV	3.33	IV
5.	Demonstration	1.67	V	4.17	III
6.	Neighbours & Friends	0.56	VI	6.00	I
7.	Relatives	0.28	VII	4.44	II
8.	News Paper	0.22	VIII	—	—

In the progressive village, village level worker was given the maximum credibility followed by radio. The least credible sources were the neighbours and friends, relatives and news paper having occupied sixth, seventh and eighth ranks respectively.

In the case of less progressive village the most credible sources were neighbours and friends followed by relatives. The Deputy Agricultural officer and radio were the least credible sources.

Differential communication behaviour of farmers

In this study the differential communication behaviour of the small farmers was studied with relation to their adoption of improved practices of paddy.

The data in Table III reveal that utilization of personal localite sources was more in the less progressive village than in the progressive village. On the other hand, personal cosmopolite sources were utilized to a greater extent in

TABLE III

S. No.	Sources & Channels	Relative credibility index	
		Progressive village	Less progressive village
1.	Personal cosmopolite	10.08	2.09
2.	Mass media	9.90	7.59
3.	Personal localite	0.84	10.44

the progressive village. The use of mass media was found to be more in progressive village also. However the difference was small. The use of per-

sonal localite source in the less progressive village may be due to the conservative nature of the farmers. The use of personal cosmopolite sources in the progressive village may be due to their more frequent contacts with people outside their social system.

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