

Information Needs among Farmers: A Study with Special Reference to Chhattisgarh

*Uday Kumar Watti and **Brajesh Tiwari

*Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur (C.G.); Email: ukwatti2007@rediffmail.com

**Associate Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur (C.G.); Email: brajeshitiwari65@gmail.com

Abstract

The study aims at exploring the extent of agriculture information needs among farmers in the Chhattisgarh state. Chhattisgarh state having 27 districts and out of 9 districts, 400 farmers were select for the study. Chhattisgarh state was purposively selected for study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select sample from population. Findings shows that majority of respondents (56.00%) were small farmers with having land holdings between 2.51 to 5 acres and majority of the respondents were assigned 1st rank to diseases related information need, followed by 2nd rank to improved seeds, 3rd rank to pesticides, 4th rank to fertilizers, 5th rank to government schemes. It was noted that the most of the respondents obtained information from their friends, neighbours and relatives. The result found that the most number of respondents believed that whatever information provided by the kisan mitra, progressive farmers and friend are very credible.

Keywords: Information needs; Farmers; Extension personnel, Chhattisgarh.

1. Introduction

Agriculture is regarded as the engine of development in most developing countries. Agricultural development is usually measured in terms of increase in production and productivity, and is often brought about by the adoption of new technologies. Specifically, agriculture is a significant factor in the improvement of the living conditions of the rural people and farmers in particular (Manda, 2002). Information is considered as an important resource in agricultural sector like other agricultural inputs. Knowledge is essential not only to increase the agriculture yield but also is necessary for the agriculture progress according to present scenario in world. It is apparent that the various kind of information is a key to solve the various problems faced by the farmers at different stages. It is necessary to locate the source of agricultural information to overcome different problems concern with farmers (Sharma, 2014).

2. Review of Literature

Fawole and Olajide (2012) revealed that majority of respondents were (78.5%) small scale farm holders, their farm size was less than 5 hectares. Lwoga, Ngulube and Stilwell (2010) established that 66.3 percent of the small scale farmers interviewed needed information on controlling plant diseases and pests, 59.1 percent on marketing, 58.6 percent on credit facilitates, 54.7 percent on control of animal diseases and 29.3 percent on irrigation practices. Bachhav (2012) showed that majority of the farmers needed information on availability of

seeds (74.29%) crop productions (70.86%) and insecticides availability (62.29%), followed by fertilizers availability (64.58%). Others areas that were mentioned by farmers included water management (34.28%), weather information (23.43%) and agricultural equipments (17.72%). Sharma (2007) observed that personal localite sources like neighbours, friends, progressive farmers and opinion leaders were played important role in transfer of rapeseed-mustard technologies to the fellow farmers. Olajide (2011) found that fellow farmers (76.3%), friends (49.2%) frequently and neighbours (44.9%) occasionally served as information sources for farmers accessing information on the food crop technologies studied.

3. Objectives

The present study carried out under the following major objectives:

- To study the land holding of the farmers and identify the information needs on various agricultural activities of the farmers.
- To find out the information gathered from local level by the farmers.
- To know the credibility of information that was gathered at local level.

4. Methodology

The survey method of research design was adopted. The Chhattisgarh state is mainly divided into 3 Agro-climatic zones - the Baster Plateau, Northern Hilly Region and Plains of Chhattisgarh. The state has 27 districts, out of which 1/3 districts, i.e. total nine districts were selected for the study. The selected districts were two districts from the Baster Plateau - Baster and Kanker, two from Northern Hilly Region – Sarguja and Koriya and 5 districts from Plains of Chhattisgarh - Dhamtari, Mahasamund, Baloda Bazar-Bhatapara, Bilaspur and Rajnandgaon. These districts were chosen from 3 agro-climatic zones because the population of this region is primarily consist of farmers. Simple random technique was used to select sampling population. A total of 400 farmers engaged in agricultural activities in Chhattisgarh were randomly selected. Data were collected through personal interview and face to face meeting with each individual by using a structured interview schedule. Result was analyzed quantitatively by using appropriate statistical tools and presented in tabular format.

5. Result and Discussion

Distribution of respondents on basis of their land holding

Table - 1: Respondents on basis of their land holding

S.N.	Size of land holding	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Small farmers (2.51 – 5 acres)	224	56.00
2	Medium farmers (5.01 – 10 acres)	109	27.25
3	Large farmers (more than 10 acres)	67	16.75
Total		400	100.00

Table - 1 depicts the status of land holding of the respondents. The data reveal that majority of respondents (56.00%) were small farmers with having land holdings between 2.51 to 5 acres, followed by a little more than one-fourth (27.25%) of the respondents as medium farmers, having land holding range between 5.01 to 10 acres, while only one-sixth (16.75%) of respondents were large farmers with having land holding of more than 10 acres.

Distribution of respondents according to their needs of information on various agricultural activities

Table - 2: Respondents according to their needs of information

S. N.	Agricultural activities	Very often		Often		Occasionally		Rarely		Never		WMS
		F	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	
1.	Improved seeds	10	27.25	17	44.50	90	22.50	20	5.0	03	0.75	3.92
2.	Seed sowing	36	9.00	11	29.00	15	37.50	82	20.50	16	4.0	3.18
3.	Fertilizers	60	15.00	20	52.25	10	25.50	23	5.75	06	1.50	3.73
4.	Pesticides	78	19.50	23	57.50	76	19.00	12	3.0	04	1.0	3.91
5.	Water management	11	2.75	58	14.50	11	29.50	14	35.25	72	18.0	2.49
6.	Irrigation	17	4.25	77	19.25	13	33.50	12	32.0	44	11.0	2.74
7.	Diseases	86	21.50	22	57.00	69	17.25	14	3.50	03	0.75	3.95
8.	Storage	03	0.75	20	5.00	93	23.25	14	37.25	13	33.75	2.02
9.	Marketing	12	3.00	29	7.25	99	24.75	13	33.50	12	31.50	2.17
10.	Agriculture equipments	19	4.75	11	28.50	12	30.25	93	23.25	53	13.25	2.89
11.	Weather	20	5.00	76	19.00	11	27.50	11	27.50	84	21.00	2.59
12.	Agriculture loans	27	6.75	11	29.75	16	40.75	68	17.00	23	5.75	3.15
13.	Government schemes	21	5.25	15	39.50	15	38.25	47	11.75	21	5.25	3.28
14.	Other agriculture activities	00	0.00	04	1.00	01	0.25	00	0.00	39	98.75	1.03

The data given in the table - 2 related to needs of agricultural related information, it was noted that majority of the respondents were assigned 1st rank to diseases related information need, followed by 2nd rank to improved seeds, 3rd rank to pesticides, 4th rank to fertilizers, 5th rank to government schemes, 6th rank to seed sowing, 7th rank to agriculture loans, 8th rank to agriculture equipments, 9th rank to irrigation, 10th rank to weather, 11th rank to water management, 12th rank to marketing, 13th rank to storage and others agricultural activities related information was assigned rank 14th.

The data further reveal that 27.25 percent of the respondents very often required information about improved seeds, followed by diseases (21.50%), pesticides (19.50%), fertilizers (15.1%), seed sowing (9.1%), agricultural loans (6.75%), Government schemes (5.25%), weather (5%), agricultural equipments (4.75%), irrigation (4.25%), marketing (3%), water

management (2.75%) and storage (0.75%). However, 57.50 percent of the respondents often required information related to pesticides, followed by diseases (57%), fertilizers (52.25%), improved seeds (44.50%), Government schemes (39.50%), agriculture loans (29.75%), seed sowing (29%), agriculture equipments (28.50%), irrigation (19.25%), weather (19%), water management (14.50%), marketing (7.25%), storage (5%) and other information related to agricultural activities (1%).

The data also indicate that 40.75 percent of the respondents occasionally required information about agriculture loans, followed by Government schemes (38.25%), seed sowing (37.50%), irrigation (33.50%), agriculture equipments (30.25%), water management (29.50%), weather (27.50%), fertilizers (25.50%), marketing (24.75%), storage (23.25%), improved seeds (22.50%), pesticides (19%), diseases (17.25%) and others (0.25%). Whereas, 37.25 percent of the respondents rarely required information related to storage, followed by water management (35.25%), marketing (33.50%), irrigation (32%), weather (27.50%), agriculture equipments (23.25%), seed sowing (20.50%), agriculture loans (17%), Government schemes (11.75%), fertilizers (5.75%), improved seeds (5%), diseases (3.50%) and pesticides (3%).

It was also noted that 33.75 percent of the respondents did not require information related to storage, followed by marketing (31.50%), weather (21%), water management (18%), agriculture equipments (13.25%), irrigation (11%), agriculture loans (5.75%), Government schemes (5.25%), seed sowing (4%), fertilizers (1.50%), pesticides (1%), diseases and improved seeds (0.75%) each.

These results indicate that majority of the respondents are feeling the need of information on various agricultural activities *i.e.* improved seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, disease control and its prevention *etc.* in order to increase their agricultural productivity. The findings also indicate that the surveyed respondents less required information on sowing of crops, water management, storage and marketing of agricultural product, agricultural equipments, and weather and climatic forecast.

Agricultural information gathered by the respondents at local level

Table - 3: Information gathered by the respondents at local level

S.N.	Information sources at local level	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage
1.	Friends	374	93.50
2.	Relatives	326	81.50
3.	Progressive farmers	369	92.25
4.	Neighbours	340	85.00
5.	Kisan Mitra	68	17.00

* Frequencies were based on multiple responses

Analysis of the table - 3 indicates that majority of respondents (93.50%) gathered information from their friends at local level, followed by progressive farmers (92.25%), neighbours (85%), relatives (81.50) and kisan mitra (17%).

It is clear from the analysis that most of the respondents obtained information from their friends, neighbours and relatives. However, the Kisan Mitra is one of the most reliable informers at local level, but the respondents were not given the significant important to obtain information from them. In this context, for proper and timely transfer of technology the kisan

mitra must be motivated to contact with the farmers and provide them the necessary need based agricultural information.

Frequencies based on level of information gathered at local level

Table - 4: Frequency of information gathered at local level

S. N.	Sources	level of information					
		Regularly		Sometime		Never	
		f	%	f	%	F	%
1.	Friends	195	48.75	179	44.75	26	6.5
2.	Relatives	74	18.5	252	63	74	18.5
3.	Progressive farmers	196	49	173	43.25	31	7.75
4.	Neighbours	127	31.75	213	53.25	60	15
5.	Kisan Mitra	48	12	20	5	332	83

* Frequencies were based on multiple responses

The data related to magnitude of information which has been gathered by the respondents at local level is presented in the table - 4, reveals that maximum number of the respondents (49%) were regularly obtained information from progressive farmers, followed by friends (48.75%), neighbours (31.75%), relatives (18.5%) and kisan mitra (12%). While majority of the respondents (63%) were sometimes obtained information from relatives, followed by neighbours (53.25%), friends (44.75%), progressive farmers (43.25%) and kisan mitra (5%). However, majority of the respondents (83%) were never obtained information from kisan mitra, followed by relatives (18.5%), neighbours (15%), progressive farmers (7.75%) and friends (6.5%).

Responses of respondents based on credibility of information which was gathered at local level

Table - 5: Information gathered at local level

S.N.	Sources	Level of credibility					
		Fully		Partial		Nil	
		f	%	F	%	f	%
1.	Friends (n=374)	328	87.7	46	12.3	0	0
2.	Relatives (n=326)	280	85.9	46	14.1	0	0
3.	Progressive farmers (n=369)	339	91.9	30	8.1	0	0
4.	Neighbours (n=340)	287	84.4	53	15.6	0	0
5.	Kisan Mitra (n=68)	63	92.6	5	7.4	0	0

The statistical figures shown in the table - 5 related to credibility of information which was gathered at local level. It was noted that most of the respondents (92.6%) believed that kisan mitra provided fully true information related to agricultural activities, followed by progressive farmers (91.9%), friends (87.7%), relatives (85.9%) and neighbours (84.4%). While, majority of the respondents (15.6%) believed that neighbours provided information were partial credible related to agriculture, followed by relatives (14.1%), friend (12.3%), progressive farmers (8.1%) and kisan mitra (7.4%).

6. Major Findings

- The data reveal that majority of respondents (56.00%) were small farmers with having land holdings between 2.51 to 5 acres, followed by a little more than one-fourth (27.25%) of the respondents as medium farmers, having land holding range between 5.01 to 10 acres.
- It was noted that majority of the respondents were assigned 1st rank to diseases related information need, followed by 2nd rank to improved seeds. The data further reveal that 27.25 percent of the respondents very often required information about improved seeds, followed by diseases (21.50%), while 40.75 percent of the respondents occasionally required information about agriculture loans, followed by Govt. schemes (38.25%). it was also noted that 33.75 percent of the respondents did not require information related to storage, followed by marketing (31.50%).
- The findings reported that majority of respondents (93.50%) gathered information from their friends at local level, followed by progressive farmers (92.25%).
- The maximum number of the respondents (49%) were regularly obtained information from progressive farmers, followed by friends (48.75%), neighbours (31.75%) *etc.*
- Out of 68 respondents, it was noted that most of them (92.6%) believed that kisan mitra provided fully true information related to agricultural activities. However, out of 369 respondents, believed that progressive farmers (91.9%) provided fully true information related to agricultural activities.

7. Conclusion

It may be concluded that most of the respondents were came under the small farmer categories. The reason behind this may be due to continuous marginalization and fragmentation of land holdings among the family members. Farmers do not have sufficient knowledge about most of the important cultivation practices, which are very essential for improving production and productivity of the crops. it may be concluded that the friends and progressive farmers are the best informers for respondent, as they use to seek information from them regularly.

References

1. Adikari, Priyangani (2014). Usage of mass media by farmers in Sri Lanka. *Developing Country Studies*, 4(4), 1-4.
2. John, Ogungbeni, Wakilu, Ogungbo & Olateju, Adeleke (2013). Agricultural information needs of farmers in Lagos State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Agricultural Science Research*, 2(4), 116-123.
3. Bachhav, Nitin Bhagachand (2012). Information needs of the rural farmers: a study from Maharashtra, India: A Survey. *Library philosophy and practice*, 866. [Retrieved from: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2043&context=libphilprac>]
4. Fawole, O. P. & Olajide, B. R. (2012). Awareness and use of information communication technologies by farmers in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural & Food Information*, 13(4), 326-337. [doi:10.1080/10496505.2012.717003].
5. Lwoga, Edda Tandi , Ngulube, Patrick & Stilwell, Christine (2010). Information needs and information seeking behavior of small-scale farmers in Tanzania. *Innovation*, 4, 82-103.
6. Manda, P. (2002). Information and agricultural development in Tanzania: A critic. *Information Development*, 18(3), 181–189.

7. Olajide, Bamidele Rasak (2011). Assessment of farmers' access to agricultural information on selected food crops in Iddo District of Oyo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural & Food Information*, 12(3-4), 354-363.
[doi:10.1080/10496505.2011.609434].
8. Sharma, Arvind K. (2007). Information seeking behavior of rural people: A study. *SRELS Journal of Information Management*, 44(4), 341-360.
[doi:10.17821/srels/2007/v44i4/44244].
9. Sharma, Ashish Kumar (2014). The study on Agricultural Information needed by farmers from librarians of CIC Sagar district in Madhya Pradesh, India. *Professional Journals of Library and Information Technology*, 4(1), 31-40.

