

AN OVERVIEW OF AGRICULTURE INFORMATION LITERACY AMONG FARMERS IN TENKASI DISTRICT

Abstract

Farming community forms an integral part of an economy. The Government has time and again introduced several measures to disseminate knowledge of agriculture process, recent innovation in the agriculture technology, etc. Farmers have always suffered threats from pests, floods and drought. Due to rapid industrialization and changing climatic condition it has become extremely hard on the part of the farmers to stay updated to current times. They are in desperate need of proven solutions to tackle the issues arising from the climatic changes. Agriculture information literacy is the need of the hour for the farmers to take active efforts in agriculture. Though several agencies are involved in disseminating the latest information in agriculture technology, it is not effectively disseminated due to myriad reasons. Being a predominantly agriculture district, Tenkasi has been chosen to conduct the present study. The farmers of the district cultivate both agriculture and horticulture crops and has been actively involved in farming activities for several decades. Hence, the present study has been undertaken to analyze the agriculture information literacy among farmers in Tenkasi district. The study has adopted simple percentage, ANOVA and t-test to analyze the collected data.

Keywords: Agriculture information, literacy, farmers.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has always occupied a significant place in terms of budget allotment and welfare measures. Farming community forms an integral part of an economy. The Government has time and again introduced several measures to disseminate knowledge of agriculture process, recent innovation in the agriculture technology, etc. Farmers have always suffered threats from pests, floods and drought. Due to rapid industrialization and changing climatic condition it has become extremely hard on the part of the farmers to stay updated to current times. They are in desperate need of proven solutions to tackle the issues arising from the climatic changes. Agriculture information literacy is the need of the hour for the farmers to take active efforts in agriculture. Though several agencies are involved in disseminating the latest information in agriculture technology, it is not effectively disseminated due to myriad reasons. Being a predominantly agriculture district, Tenkasi has been chosen to conduct the present study. The farmers of the district cultivate both agriculture and horticulture crops and has been actively involved in farming activities for several decades. Hence, the present study has been undertaken to analyze the agriculture information literacy among farmers in Tenkasi district.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the demographic profile of the sample respondents
- To study the sources of awareness about the agriculture information
- To analyse the problems faced by the sample respondents in acquiring the agriculture information

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study has adopted Multi stage random sampling to identify the taluks, blocks and villages, Snowball sampling has been chosen to select the sample respondents from the study. A sample size of 300 was adopted and a well structured interview scheduled was administered among the respondents to collect the required data. The secondary data has been collected from various published sources and government websites.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Age	20-30 years	23	7.7
	30-40 years	52	17.3
	40-50 years	178	59.3
	Above 50 years	47	15.7
Gender	Male	254	84.7
	Female	46	15.3
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	30	10.0
	School level	104	34.7
	College level	143	47.7
	Professional	23	7.6

Marital Status	Married	283	94.3
	Unmarried	17	5.7
Area of Residence	Rural	228	76.0
	Semi-urban	72	24.0

It is clearly evident from the above table that the majority of the respondents are in the age group of 40-50 years (59.3%), and are Male (84.7%). The majority of them have completed College level education (47.7%) are married (94.3%) and reside at rural area (76.0%).

Table 2: Sources of Awareness about Agriculture Information among Different Gender Group of Farmers

The mean score of different gender group of farmers on each statement related to sources of awareness about agriculture information obtained was calculated separately. In order to find out the significant difference in sources of awareness about agriculture information among the different gender group of farmers, 't' test was attempted with the null hypothesis as, **there is no significant difference in sources of awareness about agriculture information among the different gender group of farmers.** The resulted mean score of the different gender group of farmers on the sources of awareness about agriculture information and the respective 'T' statistics are presented here.

Sl. No	Sources	Gender (Mean Score among the Respondents)		T Statistics
		Male	Female	
1.	Television	4.4961	4.6304	1.559NS
2.	Radio	4.2992	4.3696	0.817NS
3.	Newspapers	4.2087	4.1087	1.120NS
4.	Magazines	4.3189	4.2609	0.717NS
5.	Friends and Relatives	4.2913	4.1304	1.686NS
6.	Agricultural/Horticulture department meetings/seminars	4.2953	4.0000	2.847*
7.	Social Media	4.3189	4.0000	3.201*
8.	NGOs	4.4528	3.9783	4.630*
9.	KVIC/KVK	4.4331	3.9038	4.448*
10.	Public Library	4.3622	4.2391	1.236NS
11.	Agriculture/Horticulture officers	4.2620	4.0187	2.461*

Source: Primary data

*Significant at five per cent level

NS: Not Significant

From the above table it is obvious that a significant difference among the farmers of different gender group were identified regarding the different sources of awareness about the agriculture programmes such as Agricultural/Horticulture department meetings/seminars,

Social Media, NGOs, KVIC/KVK and Agriculture/Horticulture officers since the respective “T” statistics were significant at 5 per cent level.

Table 3: Problems Relating To Acquiring Information among Different Age Group of Farmers

Farmers of different age groups face various problems in acquiring information relating to agriculture. Sixteen different problems were identified and given in the table. The mean score of different age groups of farmers on each statement obtained was calculated separately. In order to find out the significant difference in problems relating to acquiring information among the different age groups of farmers, ANOVA was attempted with the null hypothesis as; **there is no significant difference in problems relating to acquiring information among the different age groups of farmers.** The resulted mean score of the different age groups of farmers on the problems relating to acquiring information and the respective ‘F’ statistics are presented here.

Sl. No	Problems	Age Group (in years) (Mean Score among the Respondents)				F Statistics
		20-30	30-40	40-50	Above 50	
1.	Complexity in information	4.7885	4.7267	4.3617	4.7007	2.743*
2.	Lack of proper training	4.0000	4.8846	3.9767	3.9149	5.419*
3.	Lack of latest technology	2.5217	3.4423	3.2442	3.6596	6.748*
4.	Lack of awareness	3.3043	3.4789	3.1744	3.2766	0.870NS
5.	Hesitation to follow the information	4.4783	4.7885	4.0698	4.4894	8.721*
6.	Lack of technical guidance	4.7391	4.5058	4.4894	4.6088	7.641*
7.	Inadequate market information	3.9565	4.4231	3.4012	3.2766	4.221*
8.	Lack of cooperation from family members	3.4783	3.1731	3.0000	2.7660	1.960NS
9.	Illiteracy	3.4423	3.4012	3.1294	3.2585	6.298*
10.	Poverty	2.8654	3.1744	3.1489	3.0238	2.782*
11.	Ignorance of the sources of information	2.4423	2.9651	2.4894	2.7211	3.136*
12.	Lack of interest	2.5217	3.9038	3.8547	3.8511	5.433*
13.	Cultural beliefs	4.7692	4.2558	3.9065	4.1667	5.128*
14.	Lack of information centers	3.3043	4.3353	3.9787	4.2734	3.768*
15.	Language barrier	4.6731	4.4942	4.7447	4.6054	1.462NS
16.	Lack of other facilities	4.4423	4.5291	4.6170	4.564 6	1.938NS

Source: Primary data

From the above table, a significant difference among the farmers of different age groups were identified regarding the different problems relating to acquiring information such as Complexity in information, Lack of proper training, Lack of latest technology, Hesitation to follow the information, Lack of technical guidance, Inadequate market

information, Illiteracy, Poverty, Ignorance of the sources of information, Lack of interest, Cultural beliefs and Lack of information centres since the respective “F” statistics were significant at 5 per cent level.

V. CONCLUSION

The study has made an attempt to present an overview of agriculture information literacy among farmers. It is clearly evident from the study that farmers are in dire need of recent information and the agencies disseminating such information can take pertinent measures to ensure the information is reached to all the farmers, making no exception in terms of area, type and quantity of the agricultural produce. Agriculture information is highly essential to make the farmers take an informed decision. The Government can take up inclusive measures for not just the dissemination of the information but also for evaluating the impact of information after dissemination. Making an in depth analysis of the productivity, marketing ability of the farmers after receiving the agriculture information will be significantly helpful in understanding the lag and other bottle necks associated with it. A right information at a right time will make a huge difference in the decision making ability of the farmers paving way for efficient utilisation of resources and increase in the productivity.

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