Assessment and Analysis of Awareness Level of Communication Sources Among the Farming Community of Manipur

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ABSTRACT

In the changing global scenario, to make agricultural society knowledge intensive and knowledge vibrant one, the appropriate communication strategy can play a pivotal role. In such a situation awareness regarding the sources of communication among the prime movers of the agricultural system is too much in need. Keeping this in view, the study was conducted with an aim to analyze the awareness level regarding the communication sources of the farming community and identify the associated attributes with it. The multistage purposive and proportionate random sampling procedure was followed to identify the respondents of the study. The data were collected from farmers with the help of Agriculture Officers (AOs), Training Officers (TOs) and Village Level Workers (VLWs) using structured interview schedule through personal interview method. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the farmers were in middle age group having medium level of education, land holding, socio-economic status, cosmopoliteness and scientific orientation. Awareness of communication sources, education, socio-economic status, information seeking behaviour and market orientation were found to have significant difference among the farmers of different land holding size. Awareness of communication sources, socio-economic status, scientific orientation, information seeking behaviour and market orientation were found significantly different among the whole population However, the association of farmers' awareness and with personal and socio-economic characteristics differs between the two districts. Significant association was found between awareness of communication sources and level of education, land holding, socio-economic status, cosmopoliteness, scientific orientation, information seeking behaviour and market orientation.

Key words: *Sources of communication; Knowledge vibrant society; Mann-Whitney U test; Kruskal Wallis test;*

In the era of globalization and free trader liberalization, the agricultural system is moving faster from production led to market led and entrepreneurship led agriculture. In this perspective, the stakeholders of agricultural system are anxiouslyin need of the information on technological backstopping to feed the millions of hungry bowls and to meet the challenges of modern agriculture. The knowledge upliftment is directly related with the communication sources from where the stakeholder can access the information to make the society knowledge intensive one.

Presently, the agricultural information access services were characterized by relatively small in their group size, limited scope of their work, irregular contacts with the farmers and their organization pattern was often somewhat haphazard even though based on legislation. However, as the country progressed organizations have matured and changes have often occurred both in the organizations and execution of extension services to the farming community. Visible extension efforts started during 1900s as rural development initiatives for the all round development of individuals (*Saravanan, 2003*). Quick dissemination of agricultural practices very much depends on the use and availability of different communication sources to the farmers. The ultimate aim of information system is to develop the best possible communication system and put into practice so that information can be properly utilize at their level. There are many sources available in the rural areas like extension worker, local leader, radio, television, newspaper,

neighbours for their purpose of agricultural communication to the rural farmers (*Goswami et al., 2003*).

The information and knowledge are increasingly been seen as new factors of agricultural production partially replacing the traditional factors of production land, labour and capital (*World Bank Report, 1999*). The growth of communication technologies is a process that is both a product and a stimulus parallel phenomenon of globalization (*Marrow, 2002*). Seven percent of farmers accessed information on modern technologies from newspapers (*NSSO, 2005*). Considering the increasing emphasis on mobiles and telecenters, this comparatively "old" approach is still a relevant source of information for farmers-greater than that of the extension worker or KVK.

Manipur, one of the eight sister state of north-east India, has laborious and inquisitive farmers from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, life styles, tastes and preferences, which have a strong bearing in the information seeking behaviour and the extent of awareness and utilization of information sources. The extent to which a farmer approaches a particular source and the extent, to which he is exposed to media, influence the farmer in his decision making for acceptance or rejection of a particular technology. The media are used as a locomotive for disseminating farm information and have a strong bearing on the potential acceptance or rejection of a technology. The popular information sources among farmers have been reported to be fellow progressive farmers and input dealers, followed by mass media (*Meitei and Devi, 2009*).

Keeping this in view, the study was conducted with an aim to analyze the awareness level regarding the communication sources of the farming community and identify the associated attributes with it. The multistage purposive and proportionate random sampling procedure was followed to identify the respondents of the study. The data were collected from farmers with the help of Agriculture Officers (AOs), Training Officers (TOs) and Village Level Workers (VLWs) using personal interview method.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Imphal-West and Bishnupur district of Manipur which were purposively selected to represent the diversity between these districts in terms of agricultural research and extension organization. The two blocks from each districts were selected randomly. From these selected blocks, eight villages were selected randomly. The list of respondents were prepared with the help of Block Officers in the selected villages. Among these, 120 respondents were finally selected through proportionate random sampling procedure for the present study.

The predicted variable was awareness about communication sources was operationalised. The predictor variables namely age, education, occupation, socio-economic status, cosmopoliteness, scientific orientation, information seeking behavior and market orientation were selected for the analysis of the association between the predicted and the predictor variables. The data were collected with the help of structured interview schedule through personal interview method. The data were processed into statistical tools like frequency, mean, percentage, standard deviation, Mann-Whitney U test, Chi-square test and Kruskal-Wallis test to draw a conclusion from the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal and socio-economic characteristics of the farmers: After analyzing the data of Table 1, it can be concluded that higher percentage of the respondents belonged to middle age group, owned up to 10 acres of land, and had medium socio economic characteristics and medium level of cosmopoliteness. The respondents had medium scientific orientation, high information seeking behaviour, low market orientation and medium level of awareness regarding agricultural communication sources.

Table 2 presents the Kruskal Wallis analysis result of the predicted and predictor variables. It shows that awareness of communication sources, education, socio-economic status, information seeking behaviour and market orientation have significant difference between the three types of land holding. While there is no difference in case of age, occupation, cosmopoliteness and scientific orientation.

Table 3 presents the Mann Whitney U test result to find the difference of predicted and predictor variables among two districts. It shows that there is significant difference between the two districts in their awareness of agricultural communication sources, socio-economic status, scientific orientation, information seeking behaviour and market orientation. Bishnupur

Table 1. Distribution of farmers according to their personal and socio- economic characteristics and awareness level about communication sources in both the districts (N= 120)

Characteristics	Categories	No.	%
Age	Young age (< 35)	31	25.83
	Middle age (35 – 50)	53	44.16
	Old age (above 50)	36	30.00
Education	Below primary (<5th)	6	5.00
	Primary to middle school	47	52.09
	Above 10th to graduate	36	42.92
Land holdings	Marginal (< 1 ha)	24	20.00
	Small and semi medium (1 to 4.0 ha)	45	37.50
	Medium (4.1 to 10 ha)	51	42.50
Occupation	Farming alone	78	65.00
	Farming & Subsidiary	31	25.83
	Farming & Govt. job	11	9.17
Socio-economic status	Low (1 to 13.49)	36	30.00
	Medium (13.50 to 16.49)	46	38.33
	High (16.50 to 20)	38	31.66
Cosmopoliteness	Low (1 to 7.34)	30	25.00
	Medium (7.35 to 11.08)	81	67.50
	High (11.09 to 15)	9	7.50
Scientific orientation	Low (1 to 7.44)	44	36.66
	Medium (7.45 to 10.05)	62	51.66
	High (10.06 to 13)	14	11.66
Information seeking behaviour	Low (1 to 17.17)	32	26.66
	Medium (17.18 to 24.32)	15	12.50
	High (24.33 to 36)	73	60.83
Market orientation	Low (1 to 5.45)	51	42.50
	Medium (5.46 to 9.29)	46	38.33
	High (9.30 to 13)	23	19.16
Awareness of agril. comm. sources	Low	29.17	56.63
	Medium	38.33	69.00
	High	32.50	77.89

Table 2. Kruskal Wallis test of awareness of agricultural communication sources and characteristics among the farmers with different land holding status

Variables	Mean Score			Kruskal Wallis
	Marginal	Small	Medium	
Awareness of agril. comm.sources	33.94	35.73	36.12	9.03*
Age	49.46	48.82	50.63	1.05
Education	5.62	5.58	5.95	14.36*
Occupation	1.55	1.34	2.02	3.26
SE status	15.16	15.17	16.11	24.16*
Cosmopoliteness	10.55	10.52	10.58	3.11
Scientific orientation	9.76	9.56	9.83	2.06
Information seeking behaviour	19.21	20.80	20.95	17.14*
Market orientation	7.62	6.89	7.74	15.03*

* Significant at 5% level

Table 3. Mann Whitney U test of awareness of agricultural communication sources and predictor characteristics of farmers in two districts of Manipur

Variables	Mean Score		Mann-Whitney U test
	Bishnupur	Imphal West	
Awareness of agril. comm.sources	28.40	29.58	0.04*
Age	48.88	49.00	0.51
Education	5.85	6.00	0.73
Occupation	1.35	1.75	0.61
Socio- economic status	12.08	14.09	0.03*
Cosmopoliteness	10.19	10.28	0.64
Scientific orientation	9.08	9.23	0.002*
Information seeking behaviour	5.03	5.43	0.04*
Market orientation	6.38	7.03	0.01*

*****Significant at 5% level

district is situated far from the main capital and has less agricultural communication sources. Even though there exist, certain agricultural communication sources, farmers in this district are not aware of most of the communication sources since most of the farmers are practicing traditional farming and do not know the utility. Only some progressive farmers are aware of communication sources and have started providing information to the fellow farmers. In case of Imphal-West district, majority of the farmers are aware of agricultural communication sources and the extent of its utility. Imphal-West district has more number of public and private extension services when compared to Bishnupur district. Farmers of Imphal-West district access information from CAU, Imphal; state government line departments of agriculture, horticulture, fishery, forestry and veterinary & animal husbandry; ICAR for NEH Region for Manipur Centre; Agricultural Technology Information Centre (ATIC) and input dealers of pesticides, seeds, fertilizers, farm implements *etc.* in Imphal-West district when compared to less number in Bishnupur district. Thus, the farmers in this Imphal-West district has the chance of getting timely information since they have access to departments, agricultural clinics or any other sources they needed.

Table 4. Association between farmers' awareness of agricultural communication sources and their personal and socio-economic predictor characteristics

Variables	χ^2
Age	7.37
Education	13.04*
Land holdings	28.01*
Occupation	3.17
Socio- economic status	22.31*
Cosmopoliteness	28.27*
Scientific orientation	20.39*
Information seeking behaviour	36.10*
Market orientation	19.37*

*****Significant at 5% level

Table 4 depicts that awareness of agricultural communication sources shows significant association with the variables education, socio-economic status, cosmopoliteness, scientific orientation, information seeking behaviour and market orientation However, age and occupation do not show significant association with awareness of agricultural communication sources.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that majority of the respondents are middle aged and have medium level of education, land holding, socio-economic status, cosmopoliteness, scientific orientation, low market orientation and medium level awareness about agricultural communication sources. Again, there was difference in awareness of agricultural communication sources, education, socio-economic status, information seeking behaviour and market orientation between the farmers of different size of land holding. The findings further revealed that education, land holding, socio-economic status, cosmopoliteness, scientific orientation and market orientation exhibited significant association with the awareness of agricultural communication sources among the farmers. The ever increasing population of the country inculcates the threat of food insecurity as a grieve challenge of Indian agriculture. So, the agricultural production and marketing system is facing the major challenges like sustainable secured food production along with knowledge intensive market driven agriculture enterprise development with a focus on safety and security. In this regard, information access is playing a key role to increase the food productivity, and market the value added agricultural produce with a prefix quality standard without hampering the environment. Under such circumstances, the present study tries to identify the awareness level of the farming community about the agricultural communication sources in Manipur. The resource poor farmers with a high level of scientific orientation can increase their awareness level regarding agricultural communication sources to access the agricultural information with the help of their own initiatives.

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