

Information needs and information seeking behaviour of rural farmers of Gurdaspur District in Punjab: A study

Harpreet kaur

Librarian

PCMSD College for women, Jalandhar.

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Abstract: Information is a basic necessary of our daily activities. Every person used different sources to get information. Farmers need different types of agricultural information to improve their source of income build their knowledge about agriculture. They use different type of information tools to make the life easier way. Agriculture is the primary occupation of Indian people. Every farmer wants new information to utilize their farming sources. The present paper is related to information need and information seeking behaviour of rural farmers.

Introduction

The modern era is the era of information technology. Earlier human being had three basic needs like food, shelter, and clothers. As the man becoming more intellectual and modern, he invents many electronic devices to upgrade his knowledge. We can say that need of information technologies also included in his primary need. Today's man is the product of modernisation. Arrival of new techniques and gadgets of information and agricultural implements made the way of farmers to more easier and quick. Now a days modern information sources helps the farmers to grow crops in a proper manner from levelling their land before sowing the seeds to selling their product in the market.

India has agro-based economy most of the farming is on the small scale and marginalised. The information network of the small land holding farmers is lagging behind which causes the adverse effect on their cultivation and production. There is desperate need to get agricultural information on time. So the farmers utilize the tips and techniques to grow high variety of yields. The farmers require various information sources to upgrade their farming scientifically. It is specifically need of modern tools and techniques to the high yield variety of their crops. This is the only way to drastically improve the standard of farming. In the agricultural field right approach and modern techniques surely change the traditional methods of the farming. Since decades agricultural information plays vital role for the farmers and farming.

By the setting up of the agricultural libraries there is revolutionary change in the outlook of farmers, now their approach is more practical and modern than the than the old and traditional towards agriculture. The scientific researchers have given the new directions and dimensions to the farmers through the introduction of HYV seeds leads the way to Green Revolution.

Government schemes and programmes for farmers.

1. Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)

PMKSY launched in July 1, 2015. According to this Yojana every possible solution has been done for cultivation with the motto of "Har Khet Ko Pani" through the implementation of the principle "Per Drop More Crop." It also encourage to utilize optimize resources of water from macro to micro level. This scheme

provides the solutions to drought affected area. Beside this it also promote water saving technologies. The scheme proves beneficial for the farmers by extending area of cultivation. It also supports the water management activities through the central state level programmes.

2. National Food Security Mission (NFSM)

This mission was introduced in Oct. 2007 to improve the production of food grains like wheat, rice and pulses by millions of tons. This scheme also provides the job opportunities and improving farmer's economy. The main objective of the plan is to enhance the production of food grains and pulses through the development of area and its productivity in the specified districts of the country. It also helps to update soil fertility and productivity at the sole farm level.

3. National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)

E-NAM portal was introduced in April 14, 2016. Through this scheme electronic trading portal is installed in specific whole sale markets in centre and states under the e- NAM scheme. There would be facility of electronic auction to set the price of food grains on the common e- plate farm. Beside this it initiate composite unit and packing facilities in the e- Mandis.

4. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)

PMFBY scheme was launched in Feb 18, 2016. Under this scheme there is accomplishment of kharif 2016 with unified package insurance scheme and to reorganise weather based crop insurance scheme. By this yojana farmers have to pay very small and fair premium which would be paid by the government without any upper limit in the subsidy. The respective scheme beneficial for the farmers which defend the different risks of crop cycle from sowing seeds to harvest the crops. This scheme also helpful on the account of payment because farmers 25% amount insured at the time of sowing and mid season adversity.

Review of literature

Bankapur(2018)convey the idea with the case study “information needs and seeking behaviour of farmers in bhutaramanahatti village of belagavi district in Karnataka state: a study “ refer the way user research and utilize for improve their knowledge. The main objective of the study is to find the information needs of the rural farmers and what type of information required by the farmers. Knowledge and information play a vital role in every field, used stratified random sampling technique to collect the data for this study. For the information farmer got education up to primary school & source of information they prefer newspapers, radio etc. Majority of farmers need information about use of fertilizer and mostly they interested about organic farming.

Mahapatra's (2016) express their views with the study” information needs and information seeking behaviours of farmers in a local community of odisha : an analytical study”. Mentioned about that farmers used different type of techniques and information to improve their farming skills. The study is related to data analysis of various information requirement and information seeking behaviours, with the information they developed better farming community. The primary factor of this study to find out, what are the basic information needs of farmers, and they required quantitative as well as qualitative information for their farming.

Ansari and Sunetha(2014)in the study” Agriculturae information needs of farm women: A Study in State of North India” choose the sample purposely to focus on farm women who has a keen interesting in farming activities. To collect the data with the help of semi sturtered interview.Majorityof the farmer women who taking interest in farming, belongs to middle aged and collect their information from their close friends and relatives.they have lack of knowledge where to get agricultural information.

Geographical area of agriculture in Punjab

The state of Punjab is having 5.03 m hectare land in which 4.23 m hectare is used for farming. Agriculture is the base of human life, 75 % population of Punjab is engaged in the field of agriculture. Moreover state plays the significant role to achieve the self sufficiency in the food grains. The distribution of grains is 60% of wheat and 40% of rice in the central level. Beside this 2/3 population of Punjab is engaged in agriculture. There is approximately 30% contribution of Punjab state in the national income of the country.

There is two basic crops are cultivated in Punjab i.e. Kharif and Rabi. In Kharif crops there are maize, cotton, rice, pulses, peas, vegetables, sugarcane, jawar & Bajra. The rabi crops are potatoes, wheat, grams, oilseeds, barley and winter vegetables. Punjab's agriculture is basically intensive agriculture which included land, water, energy, nutrients and so on.

Objectives

To conclude the outcome of the idea of the difficulty under analysis, the following objectives would be determined.

1. To find out the socio-economic characteristics of farmers
2. Identify the information need of the farmers
3. To determine the general information sources, Mass Media and Social Media where farmers to get information

Research Methodology

Researcher selected this area purposely in Punjab because major cultivation has been done in this area of Punjab. Five villages namely Rupowali, Athwal, Fattupur, Shahpur jajan and Nikko sarai selected randomly for the study and from each village ten respondents were selected randomly. Thus the total sample size was 50 respondents for the study.

Significance

The Punjab is famous for its contribution in the field of agriculture since decades. Most of the population of Punjab is depends on agriculture sector; it contributes her possible share in the economy of India.

The current topic is having great importance and use for the community of farmers and information intermediate. Farmer is the bread producer for the people of the country. He devoted his life for this noble purpose. The present study analysis the deep efforts to upgrade the methods, trends and techniques in the field of agriculture and their positive approach to achieve the future goals of five year plan.

Data Analysis

T1. Gender wise distribution

S.No.	category	Respondent	Percentage
1.	Male	48	96
2.	Female	2	4

T2.Age wise Distribution

S.No.	Category	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Young(less than 30 yrs)	5	10
2.	Middle(30-60)	29	58
3.	Old(more than 60)	16	32

T3.Family size wise distribution

S.No.	Category	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Small(upto 4 members)	26	52
2.	Medium(5-8 members)	23	46
3.	Large(more than 8 members)	1	0.002

T4.Distribution according to land holding

S.No.	Category	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Marginal(upto 2.5acres)	12	24
2.	Small farmers(3-5 acres)	18	36
3.	Large farmers(more than 5 acres)	20	40

T5.Needs of information

S.No.	Category	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Pre Sowing	10	20
2.	Pesticides/Fertilizers	46	92
3.	Weather forecasting	47	94
4.	Disease of crops	30	60
5.	Marketing	47	94
6.	Various govt.schemes	47	94

T6. Information Sources used

Category of sources	Categories	Respondents	%
Gen Sources	Friends	21	42
	Neiboures	15	30
Mass Media	Radio	4	8
	Television	49	98
Social Sites	M.Phones	40	80
	Newspapers	15	30
	Facebook	3	6
	WhatsApp	12	24
	You Tube	15	30

Conclusion:

In this study majority of the respondents are men and they are mostly old aged rather than young and middle aged. Mostly farmers are large land holding which are 20 and others are marginal and small land holding. Most of the farmers are taking information for weather forecasting, Marketing and various govt. Schemes and they using different information sources to take the agricultural information.

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