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A study on media preferences of tribal farmers in the hilly district of Reasi, Jammu and Kashmir, India

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ABSTRACT

Timely information has great significance in the agricultural development. Information dissemination through highly preferred communication media constitutes one of the most striking developments of present era. It is fact that the Indian extension system is under lot of pressures where the extension workers have to cater the cervices of not only vast population but also to perform administrative, elections, input supply and numerous other assignments. Practically, it is not feasible to serve all the farmers, all the time for all the problems when ratio of extension worker and farmer is more than 1:1000.Thus, the potential of mass media can be exploited to serve the rural population of tribal farmers in the different areas. In order to increase the crop production in the tribal farmers fields in hilly areas, it is necessary that they should adopt the modern farming techniques.Hilly terrains was the major challenge faced during the study. In order to know the media preferences of tribal farmers residing in hilly areas, the present study was conducted in hilly district Reasi of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir which was selected purposively. A sample of 120 tribal farmers was selected randomly. A list of different sources of information was prepared and respondents were asked to indicate their preferences on a three point scale. It was found that Extension Personnel of KVK, Extension Personnel of Agri. Deptt. and progressive tribal farmers were highly preferred by the respondents.

Keywords: *Communication, Tribal Farmers, extension worker, respondents, hilly areas, media preferences, technologies, information, extension system.*

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the demographically the broadest economic sector and plays the crucial role in the overall socio-economic fabric in India.Mass media plays a very significant role in the dissemination of latest agricultural information and thus thus helps in rural development.The media through which the information is disseminated has also undergone revolutionary change. Information plays an important role in our society.It has become an integral part of our daily life. Its large scale dissemination through highly preferred communication media constitutes one of the most striking developments of present era.Now farmers want adequate and authentic information as earliest. The mass media namely television,internet and newspaper are catering to this need.Extension services are required to improve agricultural productivity by providing farmers with requisite information helping them to optimize use of limited resources.(Muyanga and Jayne,2006;Singh et al.,2017).

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Worldwide agriculture has witnessed a shift in the past few decades and extension mechanisms need to stay ahead and equip the farmers by enhancing their management and decision-making skills (Singh et al.,2018; Singh et al.,2020a).Extension system is also entrusted with numerous other development activities,which ultimately weaken the focus on extension(Singh et al.,2018).A large number of farmers are still unreached.In India,large number of positions in public extension system are vacant ,resulting in overload for extension personnel and thus,owing their efficiency(Mukherjee and Maity,2015).Dissemination of information through TV and radio has played a significant role for a long time but the recent developments in the internet has provided new ways of technology dissemination.Television is considered as one of the most powerful medium at present. Television can bring the world to our door steps with in seconds. This mass medium has made dissemination of news, information and entertainment possible on a scale unprecedented in human society. Keeping in mind the facts and importance of different media a study on "Media preferences of tribal farmers in hilly Distt.Reasi of Jammu & Kashmir, India" was undertaken with the following specific objective:

(I) A study on media preferences of tribal farmers in hilly Distt.Reasi of Jammu & Kashmir, India.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in hilly district of Reasi of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir which was selected purposively as the KVK was catering the needs of the tribal farmers of this district. Out of 12 C.D Blocks only 4 C.D. Blocks namely Reasi, Pouni,Thuroo and Arnas were selected randomly. A sample of 20 per cent Gram Panchayats from each selected block was selected randomly. A sample of 20 per cent tribal farmers(120) was selected randomly from the selected villages. A list of different sources of information was prepared and respondents were asked to indicate their preferences on a three point scale i.e, highly preferred,preferred and least preferred which were assigned 3,2 and 1 score respectively.The data collected was carefully scrutinized and condensed into master chart and tabulated in terms of statistical tools to represent in a meaningful way. Then the mean score was found out to rank the different sources of information of tribal farmers.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table 1: Information sources of tribal farmers

Sources	Highly preferred (Frequency)	Preferred (Frequency)	Least preferred (Frequency)	Mean score	Ranks
1. Extension personnel of KVK	72	45	3	2.57	I
2. Extension personnel of Agri.Deptt.	61	42	17	2.39	II
3. Salesmen of agril. inputs	26	47	47	1.6	X
4. Local leaders	41	37	42	1.99	VII
5.Progressive Tribal Farmers	49	55	16	2.27	III
6. T.V.	37	51	32	2.04	VI
7. Radio	27	50	43	1.61	IX
8. Extension publications	18	18	84	1.45	XI
9.Neighbourers	49	50	21	2.23	V
10 Relatives and friends	51	49	20	2.25	IV
11.Internet	37	26	57	1.83	VIII

Data presented in table 1 depict that majority of respondents preferred Extension personnel of KVK who were ranked first in order to preference. This could be due to the fact that extension personnel of KVK were highly educated,trained, skilled, knowledgeable, efficient and their services were prompt which made the farmers to approach and utilize their services for scientific crop production.Moreover,KVK Extension personnel had good rapport with the farmers and it was easy for the farmers to approach them.Further,Extension personnel of Agri. Deptt. were preferred by the farmers with second priority.This could be due to fact that the faith of farmers in the Extension personnel increased due to their prompt and efficient services in the field.Similarly the progressive tribal farmers were ranked third in order of preference. This could be due to fact that farmers of the area might go to the progressive tribal farmers for necessary advice and information and had good links with them as they were rich in knowledge and skills on scientific farming. Relatives and friends were ranked as fourth priority. This could be due to the fact that relative and friends of farmers were rich in knowledge and skills of farming. Neighbourers were ranked fifth .It could be due to that that neighbourers were having awareness and knowledge of scientific farming.TV was ranked sixth. This could be due to fact that farmers might have taken it for entertainment-cum-educational purpose. As it provides sound with videos so was considered as the credible source of agricultural information. Radio came up as the 7th important source of organic vegetables cultivation information source, which was preferred by the farmers.Apart from these sources, the other sources like local leaders, internet,radio, salesmen of agril. inputs, and Extension publications were least preferred by the tribal farmers.The finding is in line with the findings of Singh and Singh (1971), Rogers and Shoemaker (1971), Singh and Sharma (1973), Mehra (1976), Rao (1987). Chandra and Cherian (1991), Khan and Paracha (1994), Sandhu and Singh(1995), Chauhan (1997),Meena(1997),Sawarkar et al(2001), Lal (2002), Kadian and Ram (2002), Government of India (2005), Wankhade and Khare (2005). and Hanumanaikar R.H.(2011), Lal et al(2013),Kumar and Lal(2018), Lal and Tandon(2020) and Sethy and Mukhopadhyay(2020).

CONCLUSION

The results concluded that KVK Extension Personnel, Extension Personnel of Agri. Deptt. and progressive progressive tribal farmers are playing the significant role for the dissemination of agricultural information to the tribal farmers. The respondents are having lot of credibility on KVK Extension Personnel and Extension Personnel of Agri. Deptt. Due to their knowledge,education, skills, efficiency and excellent communication skills.Whereas Mass media sources like TV, radio and internet are also important in the dissemination of agricultural information to the tribal farmers.The study has great scope in finding out the various sources of information by the tribal farmers.

Conflict of Interest: There is no conflict of interest among the authors.

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