

Usage of Communication Channels for Information Dissemination by Farmers of Belgavi District: A Study

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to identify the communication channels available and used by the farmers of Belgavi District. Survey method was applied and the structured questionnaire tool was used to collect the data from farmers. Total 500 farmers were randomly selected for this study. Specifically, it identifies the communication channels used by farmers in Belgavi district and determines the factors influencing the choice of communication channels for exchanging agricultural information. A better understanding of how farmers obtain information will enhance the impacts of any agricultural extension program. The study was conducted through structured interviews with 500 farmers from 10 Talukas of Belgavi district. In each Talukas, 50 respondents from various categories were interviewed.

KEYWORDS: Information, Communication, Farmers, Channels and Dissemination

1. INTRODUCTION

Farmers are information dependent, but they have to be trained to use information; the Information Literacy programs are essential. Hence the need for right information at the right time in the right context becomes a vital communication. Information dissemination has become a major focus on emerging aspects of agriculture by using various channels like telecommunication, television, telemetric, computers, publishing firms, radio, satellite communication and libraries etc. industry, research and development, bureaucracy, journalism and entertainment also serve as secondary sources of Information for farmers. Libraries on the other hand gather, process, store and disseminate information useful to farmers. Historically the development of agriculture was seen some 10000 years

Usage of Communication Channels for Information Dissemination by Farmers of Belgavi District: A Study

back in the Middle East initially from raising animals in captivity where information was passed from farmers to farmers. The knowledge accumulation was through the word of mouth.

A farmer is a person engaged in agriculture, raising living organisms for food or raw materials. The term normally applies to individuals who do a blend of raising field crops, plantations, grape plantations, poultry, or other domesticated animals. A farmer may possess the cultivated land or may function as a worker ashore claimed by others, yet in most created economies, a rancher is generally a homestead proprietor, while representatives of the ranch are known as ranch laborers, or farmhands. Notwithstanding, in other more established definitions a farmer was an individual who advances or works on the development of plants, land or harvests or raises animals by work and consideration.

Information update and expansion is determined by some of the factors like the personal attitudes, the type of information required for and the way and source with which desired information is being sought. Similarly there are many other factors which establish the information seeking behaviour of an individual or a group of individuals such as the purpose for which information is being required, the environment in which the user operates, user's skills in identifying the information and sources preferred for acquiring the needed information.

As there is a relationship between the information gathered about the particular item and the theoretical models developed by the information seeking behaviour. Information is depending upon the need of understanding these theoretical perspectives is used in behavioral seeking studies.

1.1 Information Needs of Farmers

Larger portion of the farmers were ruralites, hence their main occupation is agriculture and its allied agro-based activities such as carpentry, crafting, blacksmithing, pottery, animal husbandry, dairy farming, poultry and other skilled workings. Therefore all the farmers' irrespective of caste, class, and creed seek information about the particular education, skill and trainings to run and maintain these agro-oriented occupations.

As the farmers have to work in the fields with the agricultural knowledge to grow different crops, get more yields, proper marketing for the disposal and distribution of products. Therefore the, farmers require information about agriculture and its allied activities.

Any rural community or farming society or the larger group of people who carry agricultural work as the main and margin labours. Female and male labours, contract labours, bonded labours, household workers and other unorganised working class. The working group does not know about the governments' schemes and labour oriented programmes and labour laws. Hence, farmers are in need of information about all these.

1.2 Areas of Information needs by Farmers

Farmers need information in the following areas:-

- Information on new cropping patterns.
- Information on procedure of sowing.
- Information on Machineries.
- Information on new irrigation methods.
- Information on Fertilizer application.
- Information on Pesticide application.
- Information on storage system.
- Information on Marketing etc.

1.3 Communication Channels

Communications is fundamental to the existence and survival of humans as well as to an organization. It is a process of creating and sharing ideas, information, views, facts, feelings, etc. among the people to reach a common understanding. TV Communicating an information signal over space requires some form of pathway or medium. These pathways, called communication channels, use two types of media: cable (twisted-pair wire, cable, and fiber-optic cable) and broadcast (microwave, satellite, radio, T.V. and infrared). Cable or wire line media use physical wires of cables to transmit data and information. Twisted-pair wire and coaxial cables are made of copper, and fiber-optic cable is made of glass.

1.4 Access of Communication Channels

Information often passes through several channels before it reaches a particular receiver, but it is rarely passed on in exactly the same words in which it was received. In particular, technical information is often distorted as it goes from one person to another. Extension agents should aim at being accurate sources and channels of information, and should make sure that farmers have heard and fully understood any information passed on to them. Leaflets and posters can be useful reminders of the spoken word.

Not all communication is deliberate. For example, people's behaviour, the way they speak to each other or the clothes they wear reveal much about them and their attitudes. If an extension agent is always late for meetings with farmers' groups, the members may come to the conclusion that he does not take them seriously. If he wears casual clothes when addressing a formal village meeting, villagers may say that he has no respect for them. Even if this is not so, the fact that they think it is will affect their relationship with the agent and, therefore, his effectiveness. The message that is received is not always the one that the source intends to pass.

1.5 Challenges in Accessing Communication Channels

There are many challenges in accessing the Communication in daily life. They are listed below:

- Lack of education
- lack of Radio T V signals
- lack of Network coverage
- Remote villages
- Cultural differences
- Attitudes
- Lack of motivation
- Listening skills
- Lack of appropriate communication tools

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. to identify the information needs of the surveyed respondents;
2. to find out the communication channels used by the farmers;
3. to ascertain ways of accessing the communication channels;
4. to identify challenges of disseminating information to farmers using the communication channels.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dinpanah and Lashgarara (2011) had investigated in their study on “Information seeking behaviour of wheat farmers in Iran”. While adopting descriptive – correlative methodological approach, these researchers have identified the factors which influence information seeking knowledge about the wheat farming. Three important factors such as social, farming and personal characteristics influence the target population on its information seeking knowledge. All these issues have been analysed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 15) most of them sought required knowledge got through Agriculture service centre, agent workers etc.

Babu, S. C. (2012) have lead an investigation on "Farmers Information Needs and Search Behaviors: Case study in Tamil Nadu, India" has two undertakings, First, a financial way to deal with information search among farmers has been described, second, some essential proof testing the implications of this methodology by recognizing the information needs of farmers and the distinctions in requirements over the cultivating populace in two areas of Tamil Nadu; Thanjavur and Tiruvarur have been exhibited. This paper has depended on a farm level survey of 576 farmers utilizing a structured questionnaire and focuses group discussions to examine farmers' information needs identifying with rice cultivation and other general information. A key goal of this examination was to recognize farmers' information needs, their sources of information and their inclinations with respect to sources. After the exploration forms, it is discovered that the dimension of information search as far as worldwide, national and local information has relied upon the yearnings of the searcher. Further, farmers' capacity to look for information relied upon the sources that were available to farmers. For instance, local information needs could be met by an efficient expansion framework that utilizations conventional and modern methods of communication channels, for example, TV, radio, and cell phones, while the requirement for global information must be met through web associations or through contact with private firms. Elements that affected farmers' utilization of information included individual trademark, for example, age, education and involvement in cultivating business attributes, such as, market orientation of cultivating and ownership of land, sort of farm undertaking and responsibility for and geological trademark, for example, separation to market focuses and separation to closest mechanical adopter.

Bachav (2013) conducted a study on “Information need of the farmers Community in rural areas” which has been conducted by survey method deals with the Farmers' requirement o daily information for various agriculture work. They used to get the required information through News papers, Government information documents about developed agricultural practice and action to mitigate crop losses.

Kumar and Kuriya (2013) in their research study conducted on “The Information seeking Behaviour of the Farmers of Khorjapur and Mavaiya village of Raibhareli District”. The study has shown that most of the farmers are less educated. They seek the required information from their friends and relatives as they don't have libraries in their villages. Further, the study has shown that they are facing the problems like illiteracy, unawareness, and lack of information centers and the non-availability of extension officers. Most of the farmers are not aware about new tools and techniques of farming.

4. METHODOLOGY

There are many well established methods that are existing by which one can collect the relevant data for the study. So, in this study survey method was used to conduct the study and questionnaire was used as a tool to collect the primary data to fulfill the objectives of the study. Totally 500 farmers were selected for this study from 10 Raitha Samparka Kendras from 10 talukas of Belgavi District. The stratified random sampling technique is used for the

selection of farmers. The data collected through questionnaire, observation and informal interviews were thoroughly organized and tabulated using simple statistical method for tables and percentage. The table and graphs were generated using MS-Excel 2010.

5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study is confined to the information needs and information seeking behavior of around 500 farmers of 10 Raita Samparka Kendra which was selected each one from each talukas of Belagavi district, with special reference to their information needs and seeking patterns. The scope of this study is further delimited to the rural farmers of Belagavi district and does not cover the farmers' information needs of other districts in the Karnataka State.

6. AGRICULTURE IN BELAGAVI

Agriculture happens to be the main sector of the economy in the district, which is about 67% of the geographical areas, fit for cultivation and responsible for providing livelihood to nearly 71% of the population. The district has ideal irrigation resources in rivers, tanks, wells etc. after the major river irrigation projects are completed, it will have an ultimate irrigational potential of about 400237 hectares.

6.1 Cropping pattern and main crops of the Belagavi District

The crops are grown mainly 67% in Kharif and remaining 31% in Rabi season. There is very little area of 2% comes under summer.

From this Table, It appears that Belagavi district has the geographical area of 13, 44,382 hectares of which 1, 90,424 has forest area, 1,14,172 has uncultivable land and 39,435 has other uncultivated land.

Table 6.1 Land Pattern (in Hectares)

Sl. No.	Taluk	Geo-graphical area	Forest	Land not available for cultivation			Other Uncultivated Land			
				Land put to Non-Agricultural uses	Barren & Uncultivable land	Total	Cultivable-waste	Permanent Pasture	Trees and Groves	Total
1	Athani	199513	581	6547	4364	10911	3171	2134	129	5434
2	Bailhongal	112233	7913	7816	4121	11937	-	1380	1403	2783
3	Belagavi	103721	22643	6875	2668	9543	2056	4225	520	6801
4	Chikkodi	126949	547	5771	5629	12300	1648	2915	126	4689
5	Gokak	154308	22284	4691	6931	11622	254	1517	0	1771
6	Hukkeri	99140	13987	11537	2736	14273	147	2583	159	2889
7	Khanapur	172956	91309	5528	2606	8134	3240	3261	687	7188
8	Raibag	95874	2647	4016	5641	9657	884	1452	11	2347
9	Ramadurg	121542	15081	2974	6187	9161	0	1192	7	1199
10	Savadatti	158146	13432	14075	559	16634	65	4218	51	4334
Dist Total		1344382	190424	69830	44342	114172	11465	24877	3093	39435

Usage of Communication Channels for Information Dissemination by Farmers of Belgavi District: A Study

Table 6.2 Gross and Net area Irrigated under Different Sources

Sl. No.	Taluk	Canals			Tanks			Wells		
		Length in KMs	Gross Irrigated Area	Net Area Irrigated	Nos	Gross irrigated Area	Net Area Irrigated	Nos	Gross Irrigated Area	Net Area irrigator
1	Athani	9	3350	2680	28	0	0	11750	17105	13684
2	Bailhongal	0	0	0	218	0	0	1822	1560	1248
3	Belagavi	0	0	0	189	0	0	3280	6160	4928
4	Chikkodi	22	10350	8280	6	0	0	15200	32350	25880
5	Gokak	82	26200	20960	10	0	0	8975	19200	15360
6	Hukkeri	75	3350	2680	12	0	0	6994	10905	8724
7	Khanapur	0	0	0	367	341	307	1717	4896	3917
8	Raibag	61	13585	10860	29	0	0	8842	8305	6644
9	Ramadurg	76	6800	5440	26	0	0	2212	25250	20200
10	Savadatti	91	8750	7000	13	0	0	2203	16540	13232
Dist Total		416	72385	57908	898	341	307	62995	142271	113817

Source: Directorate of Economics and statistics, DAC & F

From the above Table we came to know that the total Gross and Net area irrigated under different sources is 416 Kms is in length. Under this distance, out of 72385 gross irrigated areas, 57908 hectares of area is net irrigated by canals. Out of 341 gross irrigated areas under Tanks and 307 hectares of area is net Tank irrigated. Out of 142271 Gross hectares under well-irrigated area, the net area of well-irrigated is 113817 hectares.

Table 6.3 Area under principal crops: Cereals (Year: 2019-20)

Sl. No.	Taluk	Area under principal crops							
		Pulses (Hectares)							Total Cereals & minor millets
		Paddy	Jowar	Bajra	Maize	Ragi	Wheat		
1	Athani	0	27716	3899	34998	0	8474	75091	

2	Bailhongal	3534	17237	57	8340	10	3251	33059
3	Belagavi	25019	7803	108	812	366	557	34715
4	Chikkodi	730	6310	620	16320	128	2296	26404
5	Gokak	0	3994	507	34432	101	7773	46807
6	Hukkeri	1853	11410	53	10775	22	1356	25544
7	Khanapur	28793	6	0	147	506	3	29455
8	Raibag	0	937	135	19353	0	4392	24817
9	Ramadurg	9	27335	2366	17096	0	6143	52968
10	Savadatti	0	21357	1511	14445	0	12544	50278
Dist Total		59938	124105	9256	156718	1133	46789	399138

Source: Directorate of Economics and statistics, DAC & FW

The above Table gives the picture about Paddy Jawar, Bajra, Maize, Ragi, Wheat and other cereals grown in the hectares of land. Paddy is 59,938, Jowar is 1, 24,105, Bajra is 9256, Maize is 1,56,718, Ragi is 1133 and Wheat grown is the 46789 hectares of land in the total district. These are all come under the principal crops.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Primary Characteristics of Farmers

Primary information of every farmer is collected to understand different factors like age, gender, educational level and languages known by respondent farmers.

7.1 Gender wise Distribution of Respondents

Sl. No.	Gender	Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Male	378	76
2	Female	122	24
	Total	500	100

Source: Field Survey

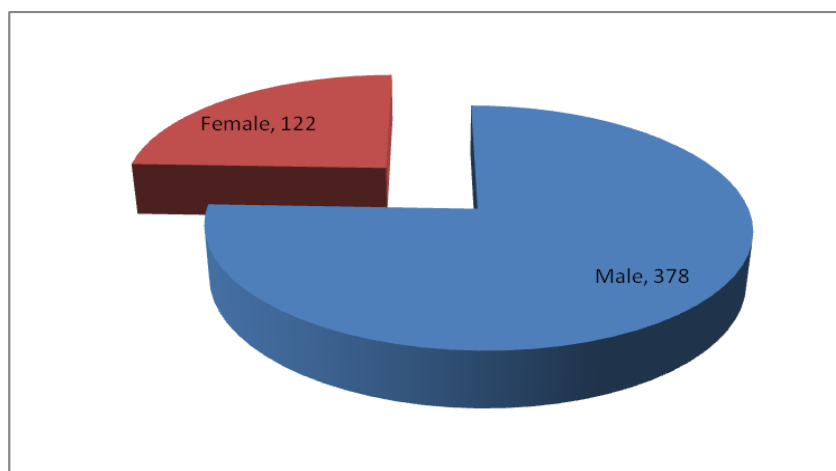


Figure: 7.1 Shows the gender wise distribution of Respondents.

Usage of Communication Channels for Information Dissemination by Farmers of Belgavi District: A Study

The above Table and Figure Shows that, out of the total 500 respondents selected for the study 378 i.e. 76% are the male farmers and the remaining 122 i.e. 24% are female farmers. The selected difference in number of respondents implies that even today, the agriculture is mainly undertaken by males.

7.2 Educational Status of Respondents

SI No	Education Level	Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Illiterate	24	4.8
2	Primary (1-4)	45	9
3	Middle School (5-7)	36	7.2
4	High School	185	37
5	PUC	118	23.6
6	Degree	86	17.2
7	Post Graduate	6	1.2
	Total	500	100

Source: Field Survey

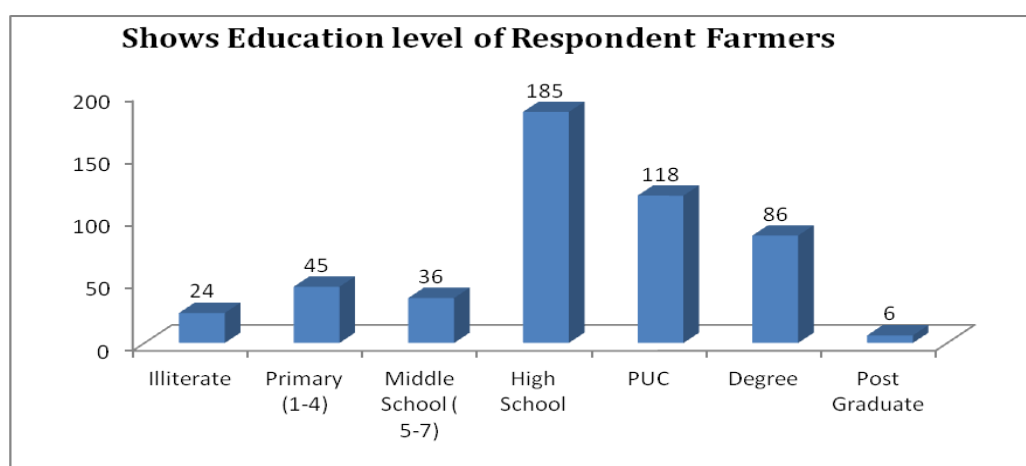


Fig.:7.2 Shows Education levels of Respondent Farmers

The above table and figure gives information about education level of the respondents. Out of 500 respondents 185(37%) are educated up to High school Level, 118 (23.6%) of respondents educated up to PUC level, 86(17.2%) respondents studied up to Degree,45(9%) are studied only Primary school, 36(7.2%) respondents are educated up to Middle School, and only 6 (1.2%) farmer respondents studied up to Post Graduation level

7.3 Languages Known by Respondents

Languages	Respondents	Percentage %
Kannada	419	84
Marathi	81	16
Total	500	100

Source: Field Survey.

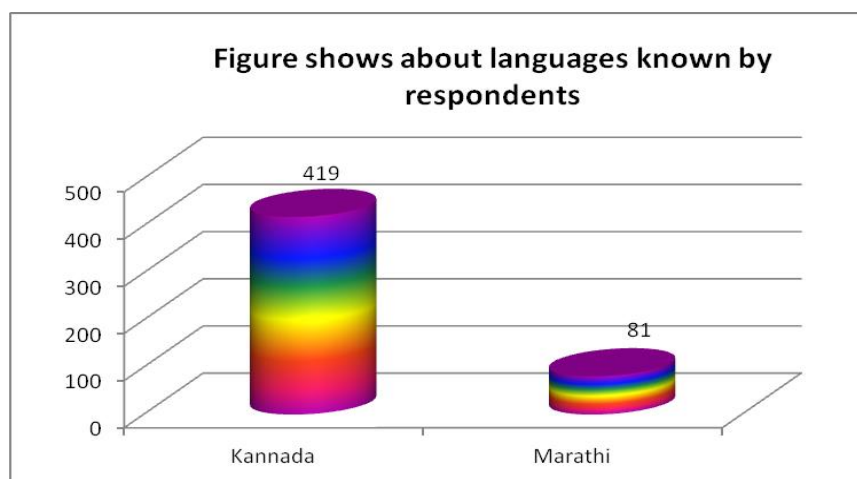


Figure: 7.3 Shows about languages known by respondents

The above table and figure reveals that 84% of farmers speak and understand Kannada, and 16% of farmers Speak and understand Marathi Language.

7.4 Personal Communication Media used by Respondents

Sl. No.	Media	Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Radio	114	22.8
2	Television	158	35.6
3	News Paper	129	25.8
4	Others (Internet, Social Media)	89	17.8
	Total	500	100

Source: Field Survey

Use of personal communication media by respondents

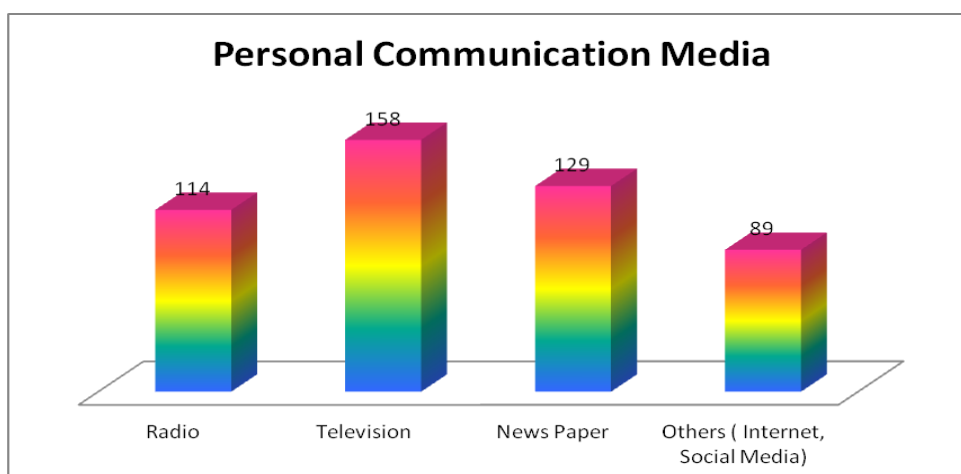


Figure: 7.4 Shows about personal communication media

The above table and figure depicts that 168 (38.6%) farmers are using Television as personal communication media, 129 (25.8%) farmers are subscribing newspapers at their home, 114 (22.8%) farmers listen to radio and 89 (17.8%) farmers are using other personal communication media like Internet, social networks etc.

FINDINGS

- The study reveals that majority of respondent farmers (76%) are males.
- It is observed from the study that 24% of respondent farmers are women farmers.
- The study finds out that majority of respondent farmers (86.2%) know Kannada Language, whereas (13.8%) of farmers know Marathi.
- It is observed that majority of the respondents farmers (37%) are educated up to High School Level.
- The study reveals that 17.2% of respondent farmers are studied up to Graduate level.
- The study observed that, there are many illiterate farmers i.e. 4.8% are engaged in agriculture.
- It is observed from the study that very less number of i.e. 1.2% of respondent farmers studied up to Post Graduation.
- The study reveals that 35.6% farmers use Television as personal Communication media.
- It is observed from the study that 25.8% of farmers use newspaper as personal communication media.
- The study clearly indicates that 22.8% of farmers use Radio as their personal communication media.

SUGGESTIONS

- This study reveals some important suggestions to all the farmers:
- Farmers must listen to Radio about agriculture, farming related programs regularly.
- Farmers must watch agriculture related programs in TV daily.
- Farmers must read articles published about farming and farm related matters in Newspaper regularly. And,
- All Farmers should get and collect the agriculture and modern technological farming procedure in any form of media regularly.
- In order to solve the problem of low availability and accessibility or complete unavailability and inaccessibility of mass media as channels of agricultural information to rural farmers, the available mass media in Belgavi District including: radio, television, newspapers, and others including Internet and Social media should devise ways of reaching out to the rural areas instead of concentrating their operations or attention in urban centers

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- The present research was restricted to Ten Raitha Samparka Kendra of Belgavi District. The study needs to be replicated in huge sample covering all major areas in Karnataka.
- A relative research of Organic Farmers as well as Inorganic Farmers can also be made to better extent.
- The area of the study has been restricted to one District of Karnataka State. So, it is recommended that research may be taken up in different regions of the state with different mechanism and variables.

CONCLUSION

In this study it is observed that limited use of mass media by the farmers in getting farming information. Television is the featured regular agricultural programmes and it was the most often used mass medium by the farmers. News paper and Radio were hardly accessible to and used by the farmers. Many farmers indicated television as the most preferred channel if it is available and accessible to them. Most of the client attributes or characteristics had significant relationship with the frequency of use of the communication channels.

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