

## **INFORMATION NEEDS OF FARM FAMILIES FOR DIGITAL AND PRINT MEDIA**

**Rajesh Bishnoi\*, Vijay Avinashilingam, N.A.\*\* and Pratibha Tewari\*\*\***

### **ABSTRACT**

ICTs in agriculture have the potential to facilitate greater access to information that drive or support knowledge sharing. ICTs essentially facilitate the creation, management, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of relevant agriculture data, knowledge, and information that many have already been processed and adapted (Rao 2007; Heeks 2002). The way in which ICT projects access, assess, apply, and deliver content may increase the likelihood of ICT use by farmers and thus may become an important factor in a project's success. Content assessment assumes paramount importance in assessing the digital and print media information needs of the farmers. The extent to which content is customized and localized to a farmer's condition influences its relevance. A study was conducted on identification of information needs in digital and print media of farmers of ICAR-CAZRI's adopted village Ujaliya of Jodhpur district of Rajasthan. A total of 30 respondents were selected randomly from the above village. Semi structured interview schedule was prepared and used for data collection. It was found that the majority of the farmers belonged to middle age group and had their education up to secondary level. Most of the farmer's primary occupation is farming, possessing 10 - 20 bighas land and belonged to nuclear family. Data collected on the subject of the interest in digital and print media shows that religion is the most preferred area followed by science & technology, literature, politics, games and business. Agriculture related information ranked first in order of preference for the majority of farmers on the basis of information needs. This was followed by health related information and credit related information (like how to get loan from banks). It was also found that the majority of respondents hardly read for 1-2 hours a week. Therefore, it is suggested to the media personnel's to design, develop and disseminate messages based on the information needs expressed by the farm families in digital and print media.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, conventional methods used for technology transfer is proving insufficient and becoming obsolete in today's context (Rivera and Zijp, 2002). Efforts are being made from extension point of view to focus more on innovations in communication as well as to have better coordination between research, extension and farmers to encourage a greater sharing of information. Growth in agriculture has slackened due to the successive years of less-than normal monsoon rains but still agriculture is considered to be the mainstay of the Indian economy due to its high share (approx. 58 per cent) of the population's

dependency on agriculture for their livelihood and employment (Economic Survey, 2013). Agriculture sector remains the backbone of country's development and lifeline for over 65 per cent of the population based in rural areas.

The initiation as well as application of agricultural knowledge is important for small and marginal farmers for improving sustaining and diversifying their farm enterprises. In India, ICT's (Information and Communication Technologies) can directly support farmer's access to timely and relevant information, good agricultural practices, market prices of commodities as well as empower the creation and sharing of knowledge within the farming

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\*Scientist, Division of TOT & Training, ICAR-CAZRI, Jodhpur

\*\*Sr. Scientist, Division of TOT & Training, ICAR-CAZRI, Jodhpur

\*\*\*Principal Scientist & Head, Division of TOT & Training, ICAR-CAZRI, Jodhpur

community itself. ICTs in agriculture have the potential to facilitate greater access to information that drive or support knowledge sharing. ICTs essentially facilitate the creation, management, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of relevant agriculture data, knowledge, and information that many have already been processed and adapted (Rao 2007; Heeks 2002).

In the past, television and radio were the main electronic broadcast media's used to reach rural communities; however, in the past two decades, Internet- and mobile-based channels have emerged as a powerful tools for quicker technology dissemination. Digital media now includes computer-based applications and such communication tools as social media, digital information repositories (online or offline), and digital photography and video, as well as mobile phones (Balaji, Meera, and Dixit 2007). However, in agriculture, despite the rapid spread and potential of digital media to facilitate farmer's access to information, many of the initiatives face common challenges, such as issues of sustainability, affordability, ease of use, accessibility, scalability, and availability of relevant and localized content in an appropriate language (Saravanan, 2010). The way in which ICT projects access, assess, apply, and deliver content may increase the likelihood of ICT use by farmers and thus may become an important factor in a project's success. Content assessment assumes paramount importance in assessing the digital and print media information needs of the farmers. The extent to which content is customized and localized to a farmer's condition influences its relevance. Thus, for rapid adoption of improved practices by the farmers, it is utmost important for the researcher to assess the need of digital and print media. The present paper attempts to identify the information needs of farming community.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in one of the purposively selected village viz., Ujaliya in Baori taluk of Jodhpur district of Rajasthan. A total of 30

respondents were selected randomly from the above village. Semi structured interview schedule was prepared for the data collection. Farmer's responses were documented through interview method. The collected data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, percentage and frequency.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from respondents through personal interview method were analyzed and result of the same is discussed and presented in Table 1.

**Age:** The data collected reveal that most of the respondents (40 %) belong to middle age group (36 - 50 years) and 36.67 per cent of them belong to old age group (above 50 years). Among the respondents, it was found that only 23.33 per cent of the farmers are young (<35 years).

**Education:** About 36.67 per cent of the respondents were had their education up to secondary school level followed by primary (23.33 %) and illiterate level (20 %), respectively. Whereas it was found that 10 per cent each of the respondents had their education up to graduation and others (B.Ed., PG, Ph.D., M.Phil.)

**Size of land holding:** It is evident from the data in Table 1 that majority of the farmers had land area between 10 to 20 bighas (33.33 %). About one third of the respondents had land area greater than 40 bighas (30.00 %) followed by 20 per cent of the respondents having land less than 10 bighas and 16.66 per cent of farmers with land size between 20 to 40 bighas.

**Occupation:** It is very clear from the Table 1 that invariably major portion of the farmers (76.7 per cent) were fulltime farmers, while 16.66 per cent of the farmers engaged in farming as well as business activities and only 6.66 per cent belonged to farming and services.

**Family type:** Based on the number of the family members, the families were categorized. It was observed that majority of the farmers (63.33 per cent) belonged to the nuclear family followed by 36.67 per cent of respondents having joint family.

The data presented in Table 2 shows that less

**Table 1: Socio-personal profile of the respondents**

(n=30)			
Sr. No.	Characteristics	No. of Respondents (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>1</b>	<b>Age</b>		
	A. Below 35 years	7	23.33
	B. 36-50 years	12	40.00
	C. 50 years and above	11	36.67
<b>2</b>	<b>Education</b>		
	A. Illiterate	6	20.00
	B. Primary	7	23.33
	C. Secondary	11	36.67
	D. Graduation	4	10.00
	E. Others (B.Ed., PG, Ph.D., M.Phil.)	3	10.00
<b>3</b>	<b>Size of land holding</b>		
	A. Up to 10 bighas	6	20.00
	B. 10- 20 bighas	10	33.33
	C. 20- 40 bighas	5	16.66
	D. More than 40 bighas	9	30.00
<b>4</b>	<b>Occupation</b>		
	A. Fulltime farmer	23	76.66
	B. Farming and business	5	16.66
	C. Farming and services	2	6.66
<b>5</b>	<b>Family type</b>		
	A. Joint	11	36.67
	B. Nuclear	19	63.33

than one third of the respondents (30.00 per cent) were having the religion as their subject of interest followed by 20 per cent respondents with science & technology. About 16.66 per cent each of the respondents had literature and politics as their subject of interest followed by 6.66 per cent each

**Table 2: Classification of respondents on the basis of subject of interest**

(n=30)			
S. No.	Subject of interest	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	Politics	5	16.66
2	Religion	9	30.00
3	Science and technology	6	20.00
4	Games and sports	2	6.66
5	Literature	5	16.66
6	Business	2	6.66
7	Others (GK)	1	3.33

with games & sports and business. From the results it is very clear that the villagers are more oriented towards religion and being busy in farming throughout the year.

**Table 3: Classification of respondents on the basis of information needs**

(n=30)			
Sr.	Information needs	MPS	Rank
1	Agricultural related information	96.14	I
2	Animal husbandry related information	74.38	IV
3	Health related information	89.24	II
4	Skill development	59.16	VI
5	Credit related	77.68	III
6	Education related	61.37	V
7	Political information	47.13	VII
8	Sports related information	41.95	IX
9	Competitive exam related information	37.83	X
10	Government policies related information like subsidy etc.	45.84	VIII

The data presented in Table 3 indicates the ranking order of respondents by their information needs. The study shows that the majority of the farmers ranked first the information relating to agriculture followed by health related information. Credit related information (like how to get loan from banks) ranked third by the respondents followed by animal husbandry related information as fourth and education related information at fifth. They were least interested for information on competitive exams, politics, sports and skill development probably owing to paucity of time.

**Table 4: Classification of respondents on the basis of time spent in a week on reading / searching for information**

(n=30)

S. No.	Time spent	Frequ-ency (f)	Percent-age (%)
1	1 - 2 hours	9	30.00
2	2 - 4 hours	8	26.66
3	4 - 6 hours	6	20.00
4	>6 hours	4	13.33
5	<1 hour	3	10.00

It is evident from Table 4 that the average time spent in a week by the respondents on reading or searching for information in the subject of their interest. It shows that 30 per cent of the respondents read for 1-2 hours a week followed by 26.6 per cent read for 8 hours and 20 per cent read for 4 - 6 hours a week. However, 13.33 per cent of the respondents read for more than 6 hours a week in their respective subject fields or specialisation and only 10 per cent read for less than an hour.

## CONCLUSION

It may be concluded that ICT provides the service of online service of education, training, monitoring and consultation. Data collected on the subject of the interest in digital and print media shows that

religion is the most preferred area followed by science & technology, literature, politics, games and business. The study shows that the majority of the farmers need information relating to agriculture followed by health related information and credit related information (like how to get loan from banks). It was also found that the respondents hardly spent any time for reading.

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Received : 17.05.2018

Accepted : 10.08.2018