Indian Journal of Extension Education
Vol. 52, No. 1 & 2, 2016 (102-105)

Communication Behaviour of Women Vegetable Growers of Nainital District of Uttarakhand

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ABSTRACT

The research study was undertaken to find out information processing behaviour and approaches used by the women vegetable growers in the six villages of Community Development Blocks, Haldwani, Ramnagar and Dhari in Nainital district of Uttarakhand. Data were collected through pre-tested semi- structured interview schedule and Focous Group Discussions from 150 women vegetable growers. The findings of the study revealed that the personal cosmopolite sources, which are part of farming community, live with the farmers, aware of farmers' problems, provide new technologies, and having close supervision, can play significant role for bringing agricultural development in the region.

Key words: Communication sources, communication behaviour, communication approach, farm women, vegetable cultivation

INTRODUCTION

Rural women are actively involved in the process of food production, processing and marketing but social and economic constraints have placed barriers around their access to scientific and technological information. The women folk do not have adequate technical knowledge to enable them derive productive use of farm input for optimum yield. The contribution of women to agricultural production over the years has been acknowledged and there is a need to make available to them appropriate information to enhance their productivity. In order to ensure appropriate farm technologies to women farmers, there is need to identify their information needs and their access to same. Women play major role in vegetable production but exploration of communication behaviour addressing women in vegetable production is virtually absent. The present study was conducted to understand the information processing behaviour and approaches used by women vegetable growers.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Haldwani, Ramnagar and Dhari blocks of Nainital Districts of Uttarakhand state in the year 2014. Two villages from each Block were selected randomly through simple random sampling without replacement. Descriptive research design was used for conducting the research. A total of 150 women vegetable growers, who are growing vegetables for commercial purposes were selected using census method from six villages. Semi- structured interview schedule, Focus Group Discussion and observations were the methods used for collecting the data. Appropriate analysis was done to arrive at inferences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Information processing behaviour of farm women

The information processing behaviour of the respondents was studied under three headings- information evaluation, information storage and information transfer with the help of the a scale developed by Sujan (1983).

Table 1: Distribution of respondents on the basis of their information processing behaviour

n=150

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Information evaluation		
Discussion with extension worker	35	23.33
Discussion with neighbour	122	81.33
Discussion with friends	134	89.33
Discussion with elder family members	145	96.67
Discussion with progressive farm women	111	74.00
Judging in the light of climatic condition	148	98.67
Judging in the light of socio-economic condition	145	96.67
Weighing in the light of last experience	150	100.00
Information storage		
By memorizing	150	100.00
Writing in note book	30	20.00
Preserve the printed matter	50	33.33
By conveying it to family members and asking them to remember	70	46.67

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Information transfer		
By normal conversation	150	100.00
By distributing preserved leaflet	30	20.00
By demonstration	10	6.67
Discussing in local meetings	130	86.67

Multiple responses were allowed

From Table 1 it is clear that in Information Evaluation Stage, the respondents weighed the received information in the light of last experience followed by 98.67 per cent respondent who judged it in the light of climatic conditions and 96.67 per cent respondents judge the received information, in the light of socio economic conditions.

Table 1 also revealed that 89.33 per cent respondents discussed the received information with their friends most of them (81.33 %) discussed received information with neighbours, 74.00 per cent discussed it with progressive farm women and only few (23.33 %) discussed the received information with extension worker.

Table 1 also depicts that in Information Storage Stage, all respondents absorbed information by memorizing it followed by almost half of the respondents (46.67 %) conveying it to family members, 33.33 per cent preserved the printed material given by different sources and only 20.00 per cent respondents' stored the information by writing in note book.

Table 1 in information transfer stage revealed that, all respondents transferred the information by normal conversation, followed by most of the respondents (86.67 %) who discussed it in the local meetings, 20.00 per cent respondents distributed the preserved leaflet and only a few (6.67 %) transformed the information by demonstration.

It may be concluded that there is need of sound and sustainable strategy to improve the information input, processing and output behaviour preferably through the mass media for rapid two way flow of information.

Information output behaviour of respondents

Data regarding information output behaviour of the respondents has been presented in Table 2 revealed that all the respondents shared available information with family members followed by 93.33 per cent respondents who shared information with the farm women of their street, 92.00 per cent shared it with their friends, 91.33 per cent shared information to those who cultivated their land, 87.33 percent respondents shared information with the person who contacted them and 89.33 per cent shared information with neighbours.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to their output behaviour

n=150

Item	Frequency	Percentage
To family members	150	100.00
Relatives	123	82.00
Friends	138	92.00
Neighbours	134	89.33
To the persons who contacted me	131	87.33
To all the persons known to me	60	40.00
Farm women of my street	140	93.33
Farm women of neighbor village	67	44.67
To those who are cultivating my land	137	91.33

Multiple responses were allowed

The data Table 2 also revealed that most of them (87.33 %) respondents shared information with the person who contacted them followed by 82.00 per cent who shared available information with their relatives, 44.67 percent shared it with farm women of neighbour village and 40.00 per cent shared available information with other person known to them in their village.

Approach of communication channels for vegetable farming practices

Women vegetable farmers used variety of communication channels to assess and enrich their knowledge base. In the present study communication channels through which farm women get information have been classified into three categories as personal localite channels, personal cosmopolite channels and impersonal channels or mass media.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents on the basis of approach of communication channels for vegetable farming practices

n=150

Activities	Approach of communication channels					
	Personal localite		Personal cosmopolite		Mass media	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Land preparation	98	65.33	27	18.00	25	16.67
Selection of seeds	36	24.00	92	61.33	22	14.67
Ploughing of field	82	54.67	36	24.00	32	21.33
Cleaning of field	23	15.33	97	64.67	30	20.00
Leveling of field	51	34.00	91	60.67	8	5.33
Seed treatment	38	25.33	100	66.67	12	8.00
Sowing	53	35.33	96	64.00	1	0.67
Manure and fertilizer	20	13.33	100	66.67	30	20.00
Raising nursery for seedling	100	66.67	44	29.33	6	4.00
Transplanting	110	73.33	30	20.00	10	6.67
Hoeing	102	68.00	31	20.67	17	11.33
Weeding	78	52.00	66	44.00	6	4.00
Irrigation	95	63.33	35	23.33	20	13.33

Plant protection measures	125	83.33	13	8.67	12	8.00
Harvesting	20	13.33	98	65.33	32	21.33
Marketing	30	20.00	80	53.33	40	26.67
Post harvesting	60	40.00	80	53.33	10	6.67

The data presented in Table 3 shows that more than half of the (65.33 %) respondents used personal localite source of information followed by 18.00 per cent respondents who approached personal cosmopolite channels and 16.67 per cent respondents used mass media channels to enrich their knowledge for land preparation. Majority of the respondents 61.33 per cent respondents used personal localite source of information followed by 24.00 per cent respondents who approached personal localite channels and only 14.67 per cent respondents used mass media channels to assess knowledge for seed selection. 54.67 per cent respondents used personal localite source of information followed by 24.00 per cent respondents who approached personal cosmopolite channels and 21.33 per cent respondents used mass media channels during ploughing of field. Two third of the respondents (64.67 %) used personal cosmopolite sources of information followed by 20.00 per cent respondents who approaches personal localite channels and 15.33 per cent respondents used mass media channels during cleaning of fields. Table also revealed that majority of the respondents 60.67 per cent respondents used personal cosmopolite source of information followed by 34.00 per cent respondents who approached personal localite channels and only 5.33 per cent respondents used mass media channels for leveling of fields. Majority of the respondent (66.67 %) used personal cosmopolite source of information followed by 25.33 per cent respondents who approached personal localite channels and only few 8.00 per cent respondents' used mass media channels for seed treatment. For sowing of seeds 64.00 per cent respondents used personal cosmopolite source of information followed by 35.33 per cent respondents approached personal localite channels and only 0.67 per cent respondents used mass media channels. For acquiring information about manure and fertilizer 66.67 per cent respondents used personal cosmopolite source of information followed by 20.00 per cent respondents who approached mass media channels and only 13.33 per cent respondents used personal localite channels. For raising nursery 66.67 per cent respondents used personal localite source of information followed by 29.33 per cent respondents approached personal csmopolite channels and only four per cent respondents used mass media channels. For transplanting activity 73.33 per cent respondents used personal localite source of information followed by 20.00 per cent respondents who approached personal cosmopolite channels and only 6.67 per cent respondents' used mass media. For hoeing purpose 68.00 per cent respondents used personal localite source of information followed by 20.67 per cent respondents who approached personal cosmopolite channels and only 11.33 per cent respondents' used mass media channels. For weeding activity more than half 52.00 per cent respondent approached personal localite source of information followed by 44.00 per cent respondents who approached personal cosmopolite channels and only 4.00 per cent respondents used mass media channels. About two third of the respondents (63.33 %) also approached personal localite source of information followed by 23.33 per cent respondents who approached personal cosmopolite channels and only 13.33 per cent respondents used mass media channels for irrigation. Most of the respondents 83.33 per cent respondents used personal localite source of information followed by few a (8.67 per cent) respondents who approached personal cosmopolite channels and only 8.00 per cent respondents used mass media channels for plant protection measures. During harvesting majority of the respondents approached personal cosmopolite channels followed by 21.33 per cent respondents who approached mass media channels and only 13.33 per cent respondents approached personal localite channels. As marketing was one of the important aspects of vegetable cultivation activity majority of the respondents (53.33 %) approached personal cosmopolite channels followed by 26.67 per cent respondents who approached mass media channels and only 20.00 per cent respondents approached personal localite channels. For post harvesting activity majority of respondents (53.33 %) approached personal cosmopolite channels followed by 40.00 percent respondent who enriched their knowledge by approaching personal localite channels and only few 6.67 per cent respondents approached mass media channels. The findings confirmed the findings of Gour and Bishnoi (2010) who also reported that women used personal localite channels *viz.* progressive farmers and their friend to receive knowledge regarding vegetable production. Personal localite sources like friends, family, relatives *etc.* were used by farm women in all important farming matters *viz.* land preparation, manure and fertilizer applications, irrigation, harvesting, insect and pest control and marketing. During discussion with the farm women it was found that personal localite channels were approached mostly by them, whereas personal cosmopolite channels were the second important channels approached by them. Some farm women also frequently watched krishi darshan on Doordarshan to enrich their knowledge. It was also revealed by farm women that they rarely had awareness of institutional sources and state agencies but these agencies never visited village.

CONCLUSION

Most of the information flow reaching women farmers works through the interpersonal information system. It is very important not to regard the oral information system as separate or opposed to the print-based information system. A lot of the knowledge needed by the community will be found and used from the interpersonal information system. Awareness regarding community radio should be encouraged. Communicating adequate information to this group is essential because these members have a big contribution to make in the development process of the community. Community radio will be particularly useful for this purpose because its programmes have lot of local contents. Womens groups can meet in the house of one of their members on a rotational basis to hold discussions, listen to a radio programme. In this way, women can participate in the activities of the agricultural extension services. The numbers of personal cosmopolite sources in the study area are also increasing gradually. These sources have different expertise. This could be an opportunity to increasingly reach farmers seeking extension services. However, it is not a matter of the presence of these sources in their vicinity; rather the issue is having good contact, getting advice, and getting benefited from their advice. Some of the households have contacted with agents and got information about vegetable farming practices. But this is not true for all farmers since maximum didn't have any contact with these sources.

Paper received on : Oct. 10, 2015
Accepted on : Nov 05,2015

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