

Information Seeking Behavior of The Farm Women for Agricultural Information Network Output Development

Ganesh Das^{1*} and Sarthak Chowdhury²

¹Subject Matter Specialist, (Agricultural Extension), Coochbehar Krishi Vigyan Kendra, UBKV, Pundibari, Coochbehar, 736165, WB, India

²Professor, Department of Agricultural Extension, Palli Siksha Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Sriniketan, Birbhum, 731 236, West Bengal, India

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ABSTRACT

Farm women need different type of the agricultural information as they are major agricultural workers. Information seeking behavior of farm women depends on their need and frequency of information seeking. A details analysis is needed to identify the information seeking behavior of the farm women for agricultural information network output development. A study was conducted on the farm women of North Bengal to find out the information seeking behavior of farm women for agricultural information network output development. Exploratory research design and both non- probabilistic sampling and probabilistic technique were used for selection of the sample respondents. It was found that information need of the farm women were high in pest and diseases control followed by weed control, seed collection and land preparation. It was revealed that information need of the farm women were high followed by medium and low and they are regularly seeking farm information. The information seeking behaviour positively and significantly influenced agricultural information network output in terms of knowledge of the farm women.

Introduction

Farm women needs most recent information on seed, pest and weed management, agricultural practices, costs, and furthermore information on government sponsored agricultural project and scheme. The importance of information in agriculture was acknowledged quite a while in the past by different scientists (Williams and Williams, 1971; Dervin, 1976; Rogers, 1995, Bhagat et al, 2004). Information seeking behavior of women farmers is

indicated how much and how frequently the farm women need the agricultural information. Farm women need different type of the agricultural information. Frequency of the seeking of the information is varying according to the availability of information sources. The information seeking behavior depends on the information need and frequency of information seeking. It was found from different studies that information need of the farm women was high in case of crop production, food processing, marketing, natural resource management, nursery raising, disease

*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: ganesh.ext@gmail.com (Ganesh Das)

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management, selling of product, storage, seed treatment, pest control, threshing. (Olowu and Yahaya, 1998; CTA, 2002; Mooko, 2005; Chowdhury and Bose, 2014). The women involvement in major farm activities was found very active but lacked in decision making and economic activity like marketing of produce (Nainand Kumar, 2010). Gaikwad and Gunjal (1999) reported that education, occupation, social participation, Information seeking behaviour, psychological variables were significantly related to knowledge of the farmers. Gholamreza and Naser (2005) from their study observed that there was a significant correlation between age, level of education, year of experience, and the occupation with the information seeking behavior. Meinzen Dick and Zwartveen (1998) and Fletschner and Mesbah (2011), from their study noted that constraints mobility of farm women might prevent them from leaving the household to join community based groups, interact with extension agents, purchase inputs from dealers or seek information and services outside of the village. Nain et al (2015) elucidated that the personal sources dominate the agricultural information system in the technologically and developmentally district, the dearth of extension personnel and their poor linkages with farmers and amongst themselves have enough indication for the development planners to think plan and implement accordingly so the farming can be retained as a source of livelihood. Similarly Raina et al (2011) reported that personal localite as well as cosmopolite sources were the major information providers to flower growers. It is essential to evaluate the information need of the farm women for increasing the agricultural productivity (Ansari and Sunetha, 2014). But limited studies were found information seeking frequency of the farm women for agricultural development. So keeping this in view the present study was undertaken to find out the information seeking behaviour of the farm and its effect on agricultural information network output of the farm women in terms of knowledge.

Methodology

The study was conducted on the farm women of Cooch Behar District, West Bengal. The study was conducted from 2017 to 2020. The research design was followed in the study was exploratory research design. This study used a five-stage sampling procedure in which both non-probabilistic sampling and probabilistic sampling were used to select the sample respondents. In the first stage Cooch Behar district was selected purposively. In the second and third stage three numbers of subdivision and one block from each subdivision were selected randomly. In the fourth stage four number of village were selected from each block and in fifth stage random sampling methods were used for selection of 25 numbers of respondents from each village. A total of 300 respondents (n)/farm women in the sample were selected for the study. The important statistical measures that were used to analyses the research data included correlation coefficient, pair wise ranking, mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage, coefficient of variation. Correlation analysis was done through SPSS 17.

Results and Discussion

Agricultural information need of the farm women

It was observed from the mean score data of the table 1 that the information need of the farm women were highest in case of pest and diseases management followed by weed control, collection of improved seed and land preparation. It is also observed from the table 1 that information need of the farm women were lowest in case of inter culture operation followed by post-harvest operation, harvesting and irrigation. The finding is in line with the result reported by

Table 1. Extent of Information need of the farm women

Sl. No.	Activities	Farm information need			Mean score	Rank
		All the farm information	Some of the farm information	No information		
1	Sowing	206	85	09	1.66	V
2	Land preparation	222	68	10	1.71	IV
3	Weed Control	242	58	0	1.81	II
4	Collection of improved seed	246	49	5	1.80	III
5	Pest and Diseases management	249	51	0	1.83	I
6	Irrigation	194	93	13	1.60	VI
7	Inter Culture operation	172	80	48	1.41	IX
8	Harvesting	174	114	12	1.54	VII
9	Post-harvest management	187	77	36	1.50	VIII

Score: All the farm information=2, Some of the farm information=1, No information =0

Ansari and Sunetha (2014), Chowdhury and Bose (2014), and Bankapur (2018).

It was found from the table 2 that level of information need of the farm women were high (79%) followed by medium (18%) and low (3%). The coefficient of variation value within the distribution (21.67%) implies that there exist high consistency levels of the distribution for the variable information need.

Seeking of agricultural information by the farm women

It is observed from the table 3 that information seeking of the farm women were highest in case of weed control followed by pest and diseases management, collection of improved seed and land preparation. It is also observed from that information seeking of the farm women were lowest in case of inter-culture operation followed by and post-harvest management, harvesting and sowing.

Table 2. Information needs level of the farm women

Category	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Statistics
Low	2.00 to 7.33	9	3	Range= 2 to 18
Medium	7.34 to 12.67	54	18	Mean= 14.86 SD= 3.22
High	12.68 to 18.00	237	79	CV= 21.67%

Table 3. Frequency of information seeking by the farm women

Sl. No.	Activities	Frequency of information seeking			Mean score	Rank
		Regular	Occasional	Never		
		<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>		
1	Sowing	154	118	28	1.42	VI
2	Land preparation	185	88	27	1.53	IV
3	Weed Control	197	97	6	1.64	I
4	Collection of improved seed	187	102	11	1.59	III
5	Pest and Diseases management	198	92	10	1.63	II
6	Irrigation	169	107	24	1.48	V
7	Inter Culture operation	111	128	61	1.17	IX
8	Harvesting	148	111	41	1.36	VII
9	Post-harvest management	134	118	48	1.29	VIII

*Regular=2, Occasional=1, Never=0

Table 4. Level of agricultural information seeking of the farm women

Category	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Statistics
Never	1.00 to 6.66	18	6	Range= 1 to 18
Occasional	6.67 to 12.33	111	37	Mean= 13.09 SD= 4.18
Regular	12.34 to 18.00	171	57	CV= 31.93%

It is observed from the table 4 that majority of the farm women regularly (57%) seeking agricultural information followed by occasional (37%) and never (6%). The coefficient of variation value within the distribution (31.93%) indicates that there was a medium consistency level of the distribution for the variable information seeking of the farm women.

Information seeking behaviour of the farm women

It is observed from the table 5 that information seeking behaviour of the farm women were high (61.33%) followed by medium (34.33%) and low (4.33%). The coefficient of variation value within the distribution (24.79%) implies that there exists a high consistency level of the distribution for the variable information seeking behaviour. So it is revealed from the study that information seeking behaviour level of the farm women was high followed by medium. The finding of the study not line with study of Jain (2007).

Table 5. Distribution of respondent according to the level of Information seeking behaviour

Category	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Statistics
Low	3 to 14.00	13	4.33	Range= 3 to 36
Medium	14.01 to 25.00	103	34.33	Mean= 27.95
High	25.01 to 36.00	184	61.33	SD= 6.93 CV= 24.79%

Influence of information seeking behaviour on agricultural information network output

Table 6 reveals that there existed a positive and significant association between the information need, frequency of information seeking, information seeking behaviour and agricultural information network output of the farm women. The finding of the study is line with study reported by Gaikwad and Gunjal (1999).

Table 6. Association of the information seeking behavior with the agricultural information network output in terms of knowledge.

		Knowledge
Information need	Pearson Correlation	.178**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	300
Frequency of Information seeking	Pearson Correlation	.285**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	300
Information seeking behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.255**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	300

Conclusion

It is concluded that information need of the farm women were high in pest and diseases control followed by weed control, seed collection and land preparation. The information need of the farm women were high followed by medium and low. It could be due to higher engagement in farming activity and higher interest to update their knowledge on scientific agriculture practices. It is concluded that frequency of information seeking of the farm women were more in case of weed control followed by pest and diseases management, collection of improved seed and land preparation. It was found that information seeking frequency level of the farm women were regular followed occasional and never. The information seeking behaviour of the farm women were high followed by medium and low. It is because of high information need and regular seeking of farm information by the respondents. The information seeking behaviour positively and significantly influence on

agricultural information network output development in terms of knowledge of the farm women.

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