

240. Information Seeking Behaviour of Tapioca (Cassava) Growers in Salem District

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Abstract. This paper is an outcome of the research study conducted by the authors on information seeking behavior of tapioca growers in Salem District, Tamilnadu, India. Data were collected by using face-to-face interview method and analyzed by using the latest version of SPSS Package for appropriate statistical procedures for the description. This study discusses the findings of various strategies and procedures adopted by the tapioca growers in meeting their information requirements through different channels. The objective of the study was to ascertain the association between information seeking behavior of farmers and their personal characteristics.

Keyword: Agricultural information systems, Information seeking, Information behaviour, Information sources, Tapioca

Introduction

Information seeking is a human process that requires adaptive and reflective control over the afferent and efferent actions of the information seeker. The study on information seeking behavior includes: the strategies people adopt for making discoveries, their expectations, attitudes, anxieties, promotion of relationships as they live and work with other information users. Information seekers should begin with finding out the obstacles which deter progress, thereby creating an information gap / vacuum. An important aspect of sense making is a process in which people struggle to understand a problem that drives them to seek meaning; for in many situations and many circumstances they are content to take no such action.

Therefore the need arises to find out if the tapioca growers are able to obtain the information they need as they go about searching for relevant and pertinent information. It is also important to find out what methods and sources of information they usually utilize while trying to meet their objectives. Sequel to these reasons, the researcher also studies the information and utilization patterns among tapioca growers in Tamilnadu.

Methodology

This study involved data collection and analysis purely based on the primary sources of information available from registered tapioca growers of the factory in Salem District. The registered tapioca growers of the factory were listed and stratified into three categories such as small, medium and large scale farmers. From the registered Tapioca growers, 117 sample respondents were selected at random. The primary data were collected with the help of pretested structured schedule by holding personal interview regarding utilization of information sources, knowledge level and socio-economic characteristics of the Tapioca growers. Thus the sample consisted of farmer's observations among the factories in Salem district.

Objectives

1. To study the role of existing information sources and knowledge level of the tapioca growers.
2. To examine the socio-economic characteristics and the problems faced by the Tapioca growers.
3. To find out the problems faced by the tapioca growers of Salem district in utilizing the information through agricultural research center.
4. To find out the utilization of credit facility by the Tapioca farmers of salem district.
5. To identify the constraints and provide suggestions for improving the existing information system.

Hypothesis

1. Tapioca farmers differ in their educational status on the basis of their land size.
2. Tapioca farmers differ in their knowledge level of tapioca cultivation practices.
3. Tapioca farmers differ in their level of utilization of inter personal sources.

4. Tapioca farmers do not differ in their level of attending training programmes.
5. Tapioca farmers do not differ in the problems faced by them in utilizing the information secured from training programmes.
6. Tapioca farmers do not differ in the problems faced in utilizing information through Tamilnadu Agricultural Research Center.

Result and Discussion

Table: 1 Distribution of respondents according to the educational status

S.No.	Categories of Tapioca Farmers	Ill	Can Read Only	Pri High	High	Mid	Sec	Col-lege	Total DF	LS	X ²	
01	Small	4	8	3	5	4	2	40	64.45	12	0.01	
14		(3.42)	(6.83)	(2.56)	(4.27)	(3.41)	(1.71)	(34.18)				
02	Medium	3	5	4	4	6	3	37				
12		(2.56)	(4.27)	(3.42)	(3.42)	(5.12)	(2.56)	(31.64)				
03	Large	2	6	5	6	6	12	40				
3		(1.71)	(5.12)	(4.27)	(5.12)	(5.12)	(10.26)	(34.18)				
	Total	9	19	12	15	16	17	117				
		(2.56)	(7.7)	(16.24)	(10.25)	(12.82)	(13.68)	(14.54)	(100)			
		29										
		(24.77)										

Hypothesis: Farmers differ in their educational status on the basis of their land size. As per the table among the various groups of farmers, High School level education is found more in large farmers. Illiteracy is found more in small and medium groups. Middle level education is more in medium farmers and college level education is more in large farmers. This difference is confirmed by the chi-square (64.45) obtained, which is significant at 1% level.

Table: 2 Knowledge level of tapioca growers in cultivation practices

S. No.	Categories of Sugar Cane Farmers	SBTT Treat-ments	Fertilizer Ap-plication	Weed Control	Pest And Diseases Control	Inter Cultivation Practice	Irrigation Management	Total
1	Small		6		12		5	
5		4		8		40		
2	Medium		4		10		3	
5		6		9		37		
5	Large		14		8		3	
5		6		4		40		
	Total	24		30		11		16
		15	21	117				

Hypothesis: Tapioca farmers differ in their knowledge level of tapioca cultivation practices.

Calculated Chi-square Value = 19.44

Degrees of Freedom = 10

Level of Significance = 0.01

It is observed from the above table that irrespective of their farm size, majority of them have more knowledge in fertilizer application followed by SBTT treatments and weed control. But among the different groups of farmers, small and medium farmers have more

knowledge in fertilizer application, but large group farmers have more knowledge in SBTT treatments. This

difference is confirmed by the obtained Chi-square value, which is significant at 1% level. Hence the stated hypothesis is accepted.

Table: 3 Utilization of Mass Media Sources

S. No. of Tapioca Farmers	Utilization of Mass Media Sources									
	Radio		TV		Journals		Films and Video		Total	
	Newspaper	Magazines			Yes	No	Yes	No		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No		
No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes			
1	Small	32	8	26	14	18			22	
9		31	30	10	40					
2	Medium	28	9	25	12	21			19	
12		25	29	8	37					
3	Large	26	14	23	16	24			16	
21		19	25	15	40					
	Total	86	31	74	42	63			57	
42		25	84	33	170					
		73.5%	26.5%	63.2%	36.8%	53.8%	46.2%	35.9%	64.1%	71.8%
		28.2%								

It is seen from the table given above that, among the various sources of utilization of mass media majority of them receive knowledge through Radio (73.5%) followed by film and video (71.8%) and T.V (63.2%) irrespective of their land size. On the basis of their groups, small group farmers utilized radio more; large group farmers utilized radio, film and medium group farmers use radio, video more. So majority of the tapioca farmers receive information through radio, films and video.

Table: 4 Problems faced by the tapioca growers in utilizing the information obtained from training programmes.

S.No.	Categories of Tapioca Growers	No Information About source	Insufficient Time	No village Based Training.	Difficulties To Understand	Other	Total
1	Small		5		6		
20		-	37				
2	Medium		8		3		
26		-	40				
3	Large		6		5		
21		-	40				
	Total 19	(16.2%)	14 (12.0%)		67 (57.3%)	- 117	(100%)

Calculated Chi-square Value = 4.690
 Degrees of Freedom = 6
 Level of Significance = Non significant

Hypothesis: Farmers do not differ in the problems faced by them in utilizing information from training programmes.

Regarding the problems faced by the tapioca growers in utilizing the information obtained from training programmes, it is observed from the above table that, irrespective of their categories, 57.3% of the farmers have told that the training programmes are not village based. 16.2% of them have no information about

source, 12.0% of them complained of insufficient time, and 14.5% of them found it difficult to understand. This difference is not confirmed by the obtained Chi-square value, which is non-significant. Hence the stated hypothesis is accepted.

Table: 5 Problems faced by the tapioca growers in utilizing the information through Tamilnadu Agricultural Research Center

S.	No. Categories of Tapioca farmers	Yes	No	Total
1 40	Small		28	12
2	Medium		26	11
3 40	Large		32	8
	Total		31 (26.5%)	117 (100%)
	86	(73.5%)		

Calculated Chi-square Value = 1.158
 Degrees of Freedom = 2
 Level of Significance = Non significant

Hypothesis: Farmers do not differ in the problems faced by utilizing the information received through Tamilnadu Agricultural Research Center.

It is seen from the table that irrespective of the categories 73.5% of the farmers face problems. But 26.5% of them did not face any problem. Category wise more number of medium group farmers did not face any problem. This difference is not confirmed, because it is non-significant. So the hypothesis is accepted.

Finding and Conclusion

- Out of the 117 samples selected for this study the following were the findings.
- Only large size tapioca growers have the higher level of education i.e. , high school education and above.
- One fourth of the tapioca farmers have good experience in fertilizer application when compared to the other aspects of tapioca cultivation.
- Radio, films and video programmes and TV are the media mostly used by the tapioca growers.
- Majority of the tapioca growers (66.6%) have not attended the training programmes. Only large farmers attended the training programmes.

Suggestions

1. The farmers are not having frequent contacts with the staff of state agricultural department and this should be increased.
2. There should be a regular meeting with the staff of tapioca research centre, staff of state agricultural department, tapioca officers, development officers of sago serve factory for the purpose of exchanging information on latest technology.
3. The telecasting time for agricultural related programmes should be convenient for farmers i.e., it should be after 7p.m in seasons like sowing, harvesting etc.
4. The villages concerned with the sago industries should be developed to a good extent i.e., provisions of formal education at least upto higher secondary level and also health centers.
5. The local library should be well equipped with materials pertaining to agricultural information and the farmers should be motivated to use these materials.
6. The Government should provide subsidies for the farmers who use new techniques in tapioca cultivation.

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