

Socio-economic status and mass media exposure

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ABSTRACT

A cross sectional sample of 200 farmers was selected across different districts, one each selected from Western Maharashtra, Vidarbha, Marathwada and Konkan region of Maharashtra. The information collected for the year 2004-05 was analysed by using statistical tools like averages, percentages and correlation analysis. It was observed that majority of the respondents had medium mass media exposure (51.5%), belonged to the middle age group (69.5%) and had studied up to Secondary level (72%). Most of the respondents (86%) were dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, had small land holdings (26.5%) and low level of social participation (50.50%). It was noted that majority of the respondents (56%) had annual farm income of Rs. 20,000 or more. Many of them (69.50%) quoted television as the source of agricultural information. The information level of respondents about local news was highest (73.50%). The coefficient of correlation between income and mass media exposure was positive and strong at 0.7034, which showed that mass media exposure was highly dependent on income. The coefficient of correlation between age and mass media exposure was negative and weak (-) 0.0911, which showed that mass media exposure was high among young farmers.

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INTRODUCTION

In India, agriculture accounts for about one fourth of the gross domestic product and is the source of livelihood for nearly two third of the population. There has been loss of dynamism in agriculture and allied sectors in recent years.

The changing economic scenario in India and the need for appropriate agricultural technologies are posing new challenges to the technology dissemination systems. Training and acquisition of skills by farmers is central part of the technology transfer system because of the new practices involved in production. India needs to have cost reducing technologies in order to have a viable agriculture and compete with other countries under the WTO scenario.

The process of communication development in India has shown that task of mobilization of people for technology based development is very tricky and complicated. It is not merely acceptance of material and technical improvements; it is a cultural, social and psychological process as well. An attempt has been made in this paper to study relationship of socio-economic variables with mass media exposure for agrarian development.

METHODOLOGY

Using stratified sampling method, based on the distribution of cultivators in the four district regions of Maharashtra, 70 farmers

from Kolhapur district (Western Maharashtra), 50 farmers from Nanded district (Marathwada), 46 farmers from Chandrapur district (Vidarbha) and 34 farmers from Thane district (Konkan) were selected randomly. Thus, the total sample for the primary data collection were 200 farmers. The data collected were analysed to know the percentage distribution of respondents according to age, education, occupation, annual income, land holdings, social participation, source of agricultural information, information level and mass media exposure. A correlation analysis was done to identify the relationship between income and mass media exposure as well as between age and mass media exposure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Age:

Out of the total 200 respondents, 2.0 % were below 25 years of age while 69.5 % were between 25 years and 50 years and 28.5 % were above 50 years (Table 1). It may be concluded that majority of the respondents belonged to the middle age group, reasons for this could be that people in the middle age group have better experience and interest in farming whereas the older ones are unable to work in farms and the young generation may be interested in occupations other than farming.

Key words :

Mass media exposure, Annual income, Age, Social participation, Agricultural information.

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