

**RESEARCH ARTICLE :**

Credibility of information sources utilised by tomato growers in Nashik district of Maharashtra state

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SUMMARY : Credibility refers to the trustworthiness of information sources as perceived by farmers is an important factor. The present study was conducted in two blocks of Nashik district of Maharashtra state to investigate the credibility of different information sources utilized by tomato growers. The present study revealed that the agri. input retailers perceived as most credible followed by social media/internet, agricultural consultant and agri. input company representative. On the other hand village level worker, co-operative society and government extension agencies were perceived as least credible sources.

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KEY WORDS :

Credibility, Source, Information, Tomato growers

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Communication is a process of sharing ideas, information and messages with others in a particular time and place. Communication sources are one of the most important elements of communication process and its effectiveness largely depends upon its credibility as perceived by the clients. It is necessary to know the credibility of different sources or channels for transfer of any new technology or improves practices. Credibility of a particular agricultural information sources or channels can be defined as the degree to which a source or channel is perceived as trustworthy and competent by the receiver. Credibility of information sources and channels affects the adoption of improved agricultural practices by farmers. Credibility refers to

perceived trustworthiness and expertise accorded to a source or channels by the audience at any given time. Therefore, sources and channels of agriculture information play major role in diffusion of agriculture innovations. Farmers respond differently to the different information sources and channels. The action of farmer mainly depends on his exposure to the sources and channels of agricultural information. Previous researches revealed that variability of knowledge acquired through different sources and channels by the farmer's accounts for the personnel characteristics like age, education, family background and farming experience.

It is hoped that the findings of the present research will provide guideline to the administrator, planners, researchers, policy

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makers, executers of agricultural plans and extension workers as it will arable to use the right methods at right time and in proper way which will lead to disseminate the agriculture messages to reach a large number of a farmers specially tomato growers efficiently and effectively. Under the backdrop of above importance of various sources and channels of agricultural information and varying preferences attached to those by tomato growers, the present study credibility of information sources utilize by tomato growers has been taken.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Dindori and Niphad tahsils of Nashik district in year 2015-16. Nashik district was purposively selected, as there is largest area under tomato cultivation. For this study seventy tomato growers were selected with simple random sampling technique and all seventy tomato growers considered as a sample and as respondents. The data were collected with the help of well-structured and pre-tested questionnaires through personal contact and were compiled, tabulated and analyzed to get proper answers for objectives of the study.

The pattern of information sources utilized by the respondents was studied in terms of their frequency of contact and credibility towards different sources of information. Frequency and ranking method were employed to understand the preference of tomato growers towards the information source.

There were fifteen sources of information in the race. The tomato growers were asked to indicate only the most and the least credibility source out of fifteen sources. Thus, every respondent indicated two sources, one, which he feels to be the most credible, and another, which was least credible in his opinion. These responses were compiled and presented in Table 1.

Sandhu (1973) studied and compared different methods to find out credibility and arrived at conclusion that least credibility index methods were efficient for measuring source of credibility.

Out of given sources of information, the respondents were asked to indicate only the most and least credible source of information. The relative credibility index was worked out with following formula.

$$\text{Relative credibility index} = \frac{X}{Y} \times \frac{100}{N}$$

whereas,

X = Number of persons who believed a source most credible

Y = Number of persons who believed a sources least credible

N = Total number of persons in the sample

It was observed that higher the credibility index, higher would be the efficiency rank.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The data presented in Table 1, reveal that farmers preference of sources for getting agricultural information was based on the credibility of the source as they perceived it on the basis of the institutes/person/ authority's image in the society.

The data illustrated that first efficiency rank was ascribed by agri. input retailer as ten tomato growers (14.29 %) placed it under the most credible sources, whereas two tomato growers (02.86 %) perceived it as the least credible sources of information. The probable reason might be due to fact that agri. input retailer provides input as well as trustworthy information and may capable of servings the farmer to the extent of the expectation, so that farmers are believed in the agri. input retailer.

Social media / internet have been placed in second efficiency rank. Eight tomato growers (11.43 %) voted in favors of social media / internet as most credible source whereas three tomato growers (04.29 %) voted it as least credible sources. The tomato growers might be placed the social media / internet at second rank because it is relatively new medium of communication and though basic use is fairly simple to learn.

Third efficiency rank was ascribed by agricultural consultant as six tomato growers (08.57 %) placed it under the most credible sources, were as three tomato growers (04.29 %) perceived it as the least credible sources of information. The probable reason might be due to fact that agricultural consultants has the specific package of practices for the increasing yield of farmer and easily available source at ground level.

The tomato growers have placed progressive farmers forth in efficiency rank. Five tomato growers (07.14 %) accorded it as the most creditable sources and three tomato growers (04.29 %) placed the least credibility on it. Progressive farmers achieved the forth rank amongst all the fourteen sources. The probable reason for the progressive farmers might have taken

much risk in adoption of an innovation in the field of agriculture and they set an example before other farmers.

Agri. input company representative got fifth efficiency rank. Seven tomato growers (10.00 %) perceived it as the most credible source and four tomato growers (05.71 %) opined it is least credible source because they conduct demonstration on farmer's field and also provide input on small scale basic to the tomato growers.

The popular newspaper article/ magazine related to agricultural information convincing the farmers to adopt new technology thus making them believe the things after giving real information in the newspaper. Five tomato growers (07.14 %) mentioned it as the most credible sources and three tomato growers (04.29 %) opined it as the least credible source. Probable reason might be that tomato growers have primary to secondary level of education so that they are able to read the newspaper and think about information published in the newspaper.

Friends and relatives got seventh rank in efficiency. Three tomato growers (04.29 %) perceived it as the most credible source and two tomato growers (02.86 %) opined it is least credible source because they might have kept some reservation in giving key information to the tomato growers.

Farmers group meeting secured eighth efficiency rank. Five tomato growers (07.14 %) accepted it as most credible source whereas four tomato growers (05.71 %) considered it as the least credible source of information because it makes a great platform to discuss idea, problems and local experiences with improved technology.

considered it as the least credible source of information because it makes a great platform to discuss idea, problems and local experiences with improved technology.

Agriculture Institutes/ KVK obtained ninth rank in efficiency. Three tomato growers (04.29 %) perceived it as the most credible source and four tomato growers (05.71 %) opined it as the least credible source.

Radio and Television got tenth rank in efficiency. Four tomato growers (05.71 %) accepted it as most credible source whereas six tomato growers (08.57 %) considered it as the least credible source of information. It is might be due to that radio does not provide such visual effect and the varieties of information as compared to others sources and so many entertainment channels of television and less time allotment for agricultural programme was the major reason for less credible source.

Shetkari Melava/exhibition was got eleventh rank in efficiency. Four tomato growers (05.71 %) opined it as most credible source and seven tomato growers (10.00 %) mentioned it as the least credible source. Probable reason might be that rarely arrangement of *Shetkari Melava* or exhibition for recommendation of new technology.

Subject matter specialist got the twelfth rank in efficiency. Four tomato growers (05.71 %) opined it as most credible source and eight tomato growers (11.43 %) mentioned it as the least credible source.

Due to lack of extension contact of the tomato

Table 1: Distribution of tomato growers according to credibility of different sources of information utilized by tomato growers (n = 70)

Sr. No.	Sources	Frequency and per cent		Relative credibility index	Efficiency rank
		Most	Least		
1.	Subject matter specialist	4 (05.71)	8 (11.43)	0.71	XII
2.	Government Extension Agencies	2 (02.86)	5 (07.14)	0.57	XIII
3.	Village level worker	1 (01.43)	8 (11.43)	0.18	XV
4.	Agri .Input Retailer	10 (14.29)	2 (02.86)	7.14	I
5.	Farmers group Meeting	5 (07.14)	4 (05.71)	1.79	VIII
6.	Co-operative society	3 (04.29)	8 (11.43)	0.54	XIV
7.	Friends / Relatives	3 (04.29)	2 (02.86)	2.14	VII
8.	Agri. Input Company Representative	7 (10.00)	4 (05.71)	2.50	V
9.	Progressive farmers	5 (07.14)	3 (04.29)	2.38	IV
10.	Radio/ Television	4 (05.71)	6 (08.57)	0.95	X
11.	Agriculture Institutes/ KVK	3 (04.29)	4 (05.71)	1.07	IX
12.	<i>Shetkari Melava</i> / Exhibition	4 (05.71)	7 (10.00)	0.82	XI
13.	News paper/ Magazine	5 (07.14)	3 (04.29)	2.38	VI
14.	Agricultural Consultant	6 (08.57)	3 (04.29)	2.86	III
15.	Social Media / Internet	8 (11.43)	3 (04.29)	3.81	II
	Total	70 (100.00)	70 (100.00)		

growers with the Government Extension Agencies, thirteenth efficiency rank. Only two tomato growers (02.86 %) voted in favors of co-operative society as most credible source whereas five tomato growers (07.14 %) voted it as least credible sources.

Co-operative society has been placed fourteenth in efficiency rank. Three tomato growers (04.29 %) considered them as most credible source and eight tomato growers (11.43 %) opined them as least credible

Village level worker was got last rank in efficiency as one tomato growers (01.43 %) placed them most credible source of information and eight-tomato growers (11.43 %) created village level worker as a least credible sources.

Sharma *et al.* (2008) reported that in India, Agriculture Supervisor or VLW is the key source of agriculture information for the farmers at village level. But it is inferred from the study that this source of information is losing credibility among the farmers due to less frequent visit and incomplete information available with them.

Meena (2010) concluded that extension officials, ARS/KVK scientists, progressive farmers, radio, television and exhibition were the sources most often used by the farmers for seeking agricultural information; this may be due to the accessibility and easy approach as most of the farmers have good economic status and have progressive attitude. This study also revealed that farmer's preference for getting agricultural information is based on the credibility of the source as they perceived based on the institutes/person/ authority's general image. Extension officials of State Department of Agriculture were found most credible followed by scientists of agricultural university.

Pradeep and Rajkamal (2008) Dairy entrepreneurs perceived technical experts as the most credible sources of information available to them. It was followed by institutional sources like Veterinary College and Veterinary Hospital. Nevertheless, credibility of communication sources such as radio, poster and other publications should be enhanced by giving right information at the right time.

Daudu *et al.* (2009) revealed that most (61.67%) of the farmers preferred extension agents as their source of information while the least (6.17 %) source was libraries.

Kakade (2013) revealed that radio is considered as

an effective tool to disseminate agricultural information among the farmers and it is the most powerful mass media for broadcasting information quickly.

Singh *et al.* (2013) concluded that demonstration was considered as a most credible source and ranked first followed by ARS/KVK scientists, trainings, print media and radio for getting agricultural information. On the other hand extension officials of state Departments of Agriculture were also considered as fair and gave weightage in adoption of wheat production technology. However, film shows, progressive farmers, tour/ field trips, input dealers, friends/ relatives and *Kisan mela*/ exhibition were perceived as least credible source.

Ravichamy *et al.* (2014) indicated that the progressive farmers were the most credible source of information for the banana growers.

Prathyusha *et al.* (2015) Friends/ neighbors and input dealers were found to be the sources of information utilized by majority of farmers for Bt cotton cultivation.

Singh *et al.* (2013) highlighted that demonstration, scientists of ARS/KVK / Agricultural University scientists and trainings activities were found most credible followed by print media.

Conclusion:

The conclusion emerged from the above discussion indicate that tomato growers have accorded top rank in term of credibility to the agri. input retailer followed by social media / internet, agricultural consultant, progressive farmers and agri. input company representative are the best credible sources for getting information for adoption of new recommended technology.

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