

## Comparative analysis of information acquisition pattern of extension personnel working in government and private sectors

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### ABSTRACT

The study conducted in North Karnataka revealed that majority (71 %) of the government extension personnel working in Karnataka State Department of Agriculture' (KSDA) were found in 'medium information acquisition' category and about half of the private extension personnel (45 %) were in 'medium information acquisition' category. Very low percentage of government extension personnel (13 %) and private extension personnel (29 %) were found in 'high information acquisition' category. Further, 'meetings' ranked first as the information source consulted by the government extension personnel, where as 'Consultation with superiors' ranked first by the private extension personnel.

Communication and information play very important role in public as well as private extension. Information is a critical resource in the operation and management of extension organizations. Timely availability of relevant information is vital for effective transfer of technology. An information system in an organization is like a nervous system in the human body. It is the link that connects all the organizations components together and provides for better operation and survival in a competitive environment. Indian farmers will have to be more competitive and quality oriented to find an established berth in the global market. All these calls for effective communication and information management system by each system engaged in designing and implementing agricultural programmes in which extension system is one of it. This necessitates the extension workers to have through understanding of the communication process and communication skills.

To achieve differing agricultural goals and serve diverse target population, a combination of public, private and voluntary extension efforts is needed. In the present context of 'Globalization' and 'Privatization', no study has been attempted to know the communication pattern and different dimensions of communication particularly 'Information Acquisition' and feedback pattern of extension

personnel working in government and private sectors.

This research study would provide an insight for studying the information acquisition pattern of extension personnel working in government sectors. Accordingly, the present study was planned and conducted in North Karnataka to critically analyze the information acquisition pattern of extension personnel working in the government and private sectors and to assess the relationship of selected personal, socio-psychological characteristics of government and private extension personnel in respect of their information acquisition pattern.

The study was conducted in four districts of North Karnataka namely, Dharwad, Belgaum, Gadag and Haveri. The extension personnel of 'Karnataka State Department of Agriculture' [KSDA] were considered as respondents. The total sample size was 360, among them extension personnel of 'Karnataka State Department of Agriculture' were 180 and the Sales Officers, Marketing Officers, Sales Executives, consultants, managers of private input agencies / firms comprised of 180 respondents.

Dependent variable was information acquisition dimension of communication behaviour which refers to the activities performed by the extension workers for the

### Key words :

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acquisition of farm information. The information acquisition pattern of extension personnel was measured with the help of communication behaviour indices with respect to information acquisition dimensions developed by Akhouri (1973).

A structured questionnaire consisting of various indices, tests and scales to measure the variables was prepared in consultation with experts and review of literature. Different statistical tests were employed to analyze the data. Besides frequency and percentage and means, various descriptive and inferential statistics were used.

The communication behaviour of extension personnel is the outcome of different dimensions such as information acquisition (input), information processing and information dissemination (output). They include all the activities performed by the individuals with respect to communication behavioral dimensions. In the present study, the information acquisition pattern of extension personnel working in government and private sectors was analyzed.

A perusal of Table 1 reveals that majority (71%) of the government extension personnel belonged to 'medium information acquisition' category and only forty five per cent of private extension personnel were under to 'medium information acquisition' category (Fig. 1)

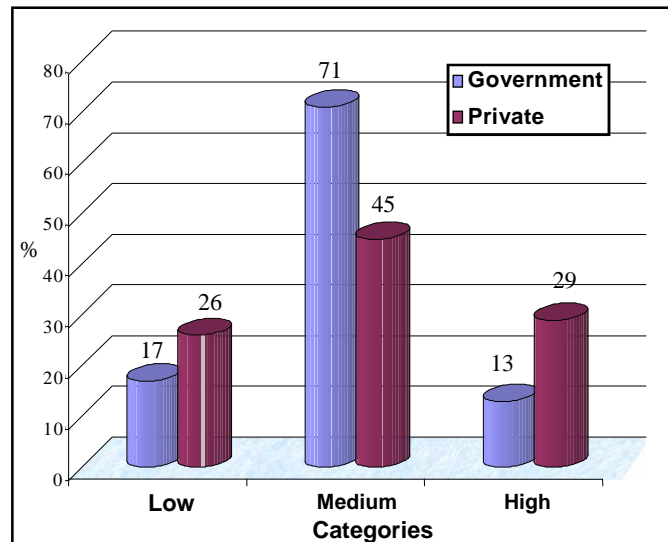
Dimensions	Categories	Extension personnel	
		Government (%)	Private (%)
Information acquisition	Low	17	26
	Medium	71	45
	High	13	29
	Mean = 121.76	SD = 48.88	

\*and \*\*indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

The probable reasons for this trend in information "acquisition pattern" of government and private extension personnel might be that both were supposed to serve the farmers for increasing crop production, they have to acquire information from different sources and in turn educate the farmers.

The results depicted in Table 2 indicate that among 15 information sources, the most important sources consulted by the government extension personnel to get the technical information of agriculture were 'meetings', 'consultations with superiors', 'package of practice book' and 'extension journals'.

Detailed analysis of the information acquisition revealed that Assistant Agriculture Officers (AAOs)



**Fig. 1: Distribution of extension personnel according to their information acquisition pattern**

acquired information from 'meetings', 'consultation with superiors' and 'package of practice book' and Agriculture Assistants (AAs) acquired information from 'meeting', 'consultation with superiors' and 'mass media'. It is surprising to note that the modern channels like 'internet' and 'CD-ROM' were least consulted information sources to get technical information.

With regard to the information acquisition pattern of private extension personnel, the important sources consulted were 'consultation with superiors', 'package of practice' (Agriculture University publication), 'meetings', 'consultation with fellow workers' and 'mass media channels'. The findings in conformity with those reported by Shinde (1990) and Zuber (2002).

The findings were partially in conformity with the findings of Mathewos (2002) who reported that 'Agriculture University' was most frequently consulted source for technical information. In the present study 'package of practice' (Agriculture University publication) ranked second. The same trend was observed with respect to consultation of modern channels. The percentage of extension personnel who consulted modern channels like 'internet' and 'CD-Rom' was higher in case of private extension personnel compared to government extension.

It is clearly observed from the results (Table 3) that the variables such as education, income and mass media exposure were positively and significantly related with information acquisition dimension.

The significant and positive relationship between communication behaviour and some of the selected characteristics of government extension personnel might be due to following reasons:

**Table 2: Information acquisition - Information sources consulted by the extension personnel working in government and private sector**

Sr. No.	Information source/Channels	Government (N=180)						Private (N= 180)					
		AAO		AA		Total		AM		MO		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Publication	30	75	54	39	84	46	14	56	85	36	99	55
	Research Journals												
	Magazines	28	70	91	65	119	66	22	88	82	57	104	58
	Extension Journal	32	80	110	79	142	79	12	48	105	31	117	65
	Leaflet/ Pamphlet	25	63	112	80	137	76	10	40	98	26	108	60
	Package of practice book	35	88	111	79	146	81	15	60	111	39	126	70
2.	Consultation with superiors	36	90	118	84	154	86	18	72	137	46	155	86
3.	Consultation with fellow workers	34	85	98	70	132	73	0	0	0	0	135	75
4.	Visit to Research Station/Farms	24	60	60	43	80	44	14	56	58	36	72	40
5.	Visit to demonstration plots/trails	28	70	87	62	115	64	12	48	110	31	122	68
6.	Mass media exposure (Radio, Newspaper, T.V)	32	80	114	81	134	74	20	80	108	52	128	71
7.	Meetings	37	93	126	90	163	91	11	44	133	28	144	80
8.	Campaigns	23	58	12	9	35	20	12	48	42	31	54	30
9.	Krisimela	25	63	20	14	45	25	15	60	57	39	72	40
10.	Modern channels												
	a. Internet	12	30	0	0	12	7	21	84	42	54	63	35
	b. CD-ROM	10	25	0	0	10	6	15	60	35	39	50	28

It was quite logical that extension personnel with high education level, more experience, training and mass media exposure were expected to have more knowledge and understanding which in turn motivated them to

perform various acts for seeking farm information better (Table 3). The findings were in conformity with those of Shinde (1990) and Zuber (2002).

**Table 3: Correlation coefficients of independent variables of extension personnel working in government and private sector with their information acquisition pattern (N=180)**

Independent variables	Information Acquisition Pattern	
	Government	Private
Age	0.098	- 0.111
Education	0.192 *	0.204 **
Experience	0.132	0.187 *
Income	0.222 *	0.052
Training	0.086	0.101
Family back ground	0.005	-0.088
Mass media exposure	0.189 *	0.160 **
Job facility	0.019	-0.106
Job satisfaction	-0.095	0.080
Achievement motivation	0.069	-0.008

\* and \*\* indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

### Conclusion:

The results of the study indicated that majority of the respondents were in 'medium of information acquisition pattern' category. It is necessary to improve the information acquisition pattern from 'medium to 'high category. Information acquisition pattern contributes and influences overall communication behaviour which ultimately results in effective 'Transfer of Technology' and 'Farmer's education'.

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