



Research Article

Information seeking behaviour of the rice growers

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SUMMARY : The present investigation was confined to Navsari district of South Gujarat. The information need of the 100 rice growers was measured using three point continuums. Major area of information needs expressed by the rice growers in descending order of rank were schedule of water supply by canal, weed management, marketing, irrigation management, variety, preparation of seedlings, plant protection measures, land preparation and sowing, fertilizer management, harvesting and post harvesting technology and supportive facts. This means that the rice growers gave highest emphasis on schedule of water to be supplied by canal related information, as this, information can help them to make a great management on schedule of water to be supplied by canal. They were also conscious about information on weed management as well as marketing and many other aspects of paddy. They articulated high need for information on market price followed by quality parameters that affects price and time of market inflow. It can be seen that the rice growers expressed their needs for information about subsidies, insurance and government policies related to rice cultivation. It was also observed from this study that five variables *viz.*, use of information sources, extension participation, land under rice cultivation and cosmopolitaness were observed positive and significantly related with the information needs of the paddy growers. Age, education, social participation, size of land holding, irrigated area to total land, annual income, economic motivation and market orientation was observed positively and non-significantly related with the information needs of the paddy growers.

KEY WORDS :

Information seeking,
Behaviour,
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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Rice is predominantly grown in Navsari district as it is the staple food crop of this region. The studies conducted in past in this region regarding rice crop production technology indicate that there is a wide gap exist between the knowhow already attained and their application in the fields. Thus, there is a wide scope for increasing production of rice per unit area. In order to increase the level of adoption, farmer must be made aware of the improved technologies. Looking to the importance of the rice crop in the global economy, the year 2004 was celebrated as international rice year (Manjunath *et al.*, 2011).

Acquisition of information has always been regarded as a factor playing an important role in molding human behaviour leading to decision for

adopting of innovation. Mass dissemination of information may play an important role in increasing the adoption of technology. The preparation of good content of information of rice farming is possible based on the real information needs of the farmers. The content based on actual needs of the users will create interest among them to apply it in practice (Mehta, 2003). With a view to supporting larger group of rice growers with agricultural information in future, the present study was carried out with specific objective to ascertain the information needs of the rice growers. The golden era of an information age the high-tech rice production and marketing technologies should be reached to the final end users *i.e.* farmers. Hence, this attempt was made to study the information needs of the rice growers to increase rice production and income, too.

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Mass dissemination of information may play an important role in view of its larger area coverage. Acquisition of information has always been regarded as a factor playing an important role in molding human behaviour leading to decision for adopting of innovation. Thus, identifying information needs of the users can become solid basis for developing meaningful information warehouse. Keeping in view the significance of the information needs of the rice growers, the present study was undertaken with the following objectives :

- To ascertain the information needs of the rice growers.
- To study the relationship between selected personal, social, communicational, economical and psychological characteristics of rice growers and their information needs.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The present investigation was confined to Navsari district of Gujarat state. Navsari district comprises of five talukas viz., Navsari, Jalalpor, Chikhli, Gandevi and Vandsa. All the taluka having need of rice growing information in the district, all 5 talukas were selected for the study. A 20 rice grower were selected from selected 2 villages of each talukas, simple random sampling method was used for selection of the respondents of rice. Total 100 rice growers were selected from randomly selected villages. The lists of rice growers were obtained for each of the selected villages from the Gram Panchayat office. The information need of the farmer was measured using three point continuums. The mean score was obtained by the total number of score divided by total number of respondents. The mean score was obtained by the total number of score divided by total number of respondents. Co-efficient of correlation was computed to find out the relationship between each of the independent variables and the dependent variable.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The experimental findings obtained from the present study have been discussed in following heads:

Information need of the rice growers :

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that major area of information needs expressed by the rice growers, respectively in descending order of rank were schedule of water supply by canal, weed management, marketing, irrigation management, variety, preparation of seedlings, plant protection measures, land preparation and sowing, fertilizer management, harvesting and post harvesting technology and supportive facts. Chauhan (2012) reported the same. This means that the rice growers gave highest emphasis on schedule of water to be supplied by canal related information, as this information can help them to make a great management on schedule of water to be supplied by canal. They were also conscious about

information on weed management as well as marketing and many other aspects of paddy. Prakash and Singh (2010) and Chauhan (2009) reported the results in this consistency. They articulated high need for information on market price followed by quality parameters that affects price and time of market inflow. The data also reflect that the rice growers have become more cautious about fertilizer management due to new trend of organic rice framing. Singh (2005) also reported the same. It can be seen that the rice growers expressed their needs for information about subsidies, insurance and government policies related to rice cultivation. Chauhan (2011) also reported the same. Prakash and Singh (2010) reported the results on weed management as well as marketing and many other aspects of paddy.

Table 1 : Over all information needs of the rice growers (n=100)

Sr. No.	Areas of information	Mean score	Rank
1.	Variety	1.39	V
2.	Schedule of water supply by canal	1.71	I
3.	Preparation of seedlings	0.64	VI
4.	Land preparation and sowing	0.45	VIII
5.	Fertilizer management	0.23	IX
6.	Weed management	1.52	II
7.	Irrigation management	1.41	IV
8.	Plant protection measures	0.51	VII
9.	Harvesting and post harvesting technology	0.18	X
10.	Marketing	1.47	III
11.	Supportive facts	0.09	XI
(Mean = 10.2)		(S.D. = 2.30)	

Correlation between independent and dependent variables :

The data presented in Table 2 clearly signify that five variables viz., use of information sources, extension participation, land under rice cultivation and cosmopolitaness were observed positive and significantly related with the information needs of the paddy growers. Age, education, social participation, size of land holding, irrigated area to total land, annual income, economic motivation and market orientation were observed positively non-significantly related with the information needs of the paddy growers. Information need of the rice growers had non-significant correlation with their age and education. This may be due to the fact that irrespective level of education, level of the rice growers had information need for rice cultivation remained indifferent. The information need of the rice growers had significant correlation with their extent of utilization of information sources. It indicates that those rice growers who utilize more information sources to acquire information regarding rice cultivation, have shown higher need for such information. This may be due to the fact that those who were using various sources of information might have understood importance of information regarding rice

cultivation. Social participation of the rice growers had non-significant correlation with their information need. It reflects that social organizations of villages failed to motivate rice growers to decide difference between what is and what should be for higher production of rice.

Table 2 : Correlation between characteristics of rice growers and information need (n=100)

Sr. No.	Personal traits	Correlation co-efficient value
1.	Age	0.064 ^{NS}
2.	Education	0.011 ^{NS}
3.	Use of information sources	0.203*
4.	Social participation	0.025 ^{NS}
5.	Extension participation	0.263*
6.	Size of land holding	-0.146 ^{NS}
7.	Land under rice cultivation	0.208*
8.	Irrigated area to total land	-0.146 ^{NS}
9.	Annual income	-0.184 ^{NS}
10.	Cosmopolitaness	0.197*
11.	Economic motivation	0.004 ^{NS}
12.	Market orientation	-0.231 ^{NS}

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 (0.196) and P=0.01 (0.256), respectively NS =Non - significant

It is obvious from the result in the same table that the information need of the rice growers had significant correlation with their level of extension participation. It means that extension agencies played pivotal role in identifying rice growers' information needs. The probable reason for this might be that extension activities have been considered as an important source for getting information regarding agriculture certainly by those farmers, who were inquisitive to obtain information, took active part in extension activities. Information need of the rice growers had non-significant correlation with their size of land holding. It shows that there were all most similar needs of the rice growers with small, medium and big size of land holdings. The probable reason might be that irrespective of the size of land holding, the rice growers always try to get maximum returns from their available resources. Further, the crop being profitable one, the farmers required to be updated with latest information that leads to stability in information need irrespective to the size of holding. Similar results were also found by Riram *et al.* (1998).

Information need of the rice growers had significant correlation with the proportionate land under rice cultivation of their total land. whereas it had non-significant correlation with their proportionate irrigated area to total land. The farmer, who covers big portion of his total land under rice cultivation, transmits more risk for this crop, which leads them to have more information

to minimize risk factors. Any increase in irrigated area has no influence over information need of the rice grower. The findings are in line with the findings of Talati (1994).

Information need of the rice growers had non-significant correlation with their annual income and level of economic motivation. It means that there was similar level of interest to have information on rice among rich and poor rice growers. The rice growers, with irrespective of annual income, will always have interest to increase their income that this factor might have led them to have information need for the rice cultivation technologies. Similar work on the related topic were also done by Nath *et al.* (2001); Pal *et al.* (1999); Rahman *et al.* (1997) and Solanki and Kadam (1993).

Conclusion :

It can be concluded that majority of the rice growers had expressed plant protection measures; marketing, schedule of water supply by canal, fertilizer management and irrigation management are the important areas of information needs. The independent variables like use of information sources, extension participation, land under rice cultivation and cosmopolitaness were significantly related with their information needs for rice cultivation. Rice growers who had better contact with sources of information, extension personals and more area under rice cultivation as well as high level of cosmopolitaness realized more information on various aspects of rice cultivation. They articulated high need for information on market price followed by quality parameters that affects price and time of market inflow. The data also reflect that the rice growers have become more cautious about fertilizer management due to new trend of organic rice framing. Singh (2005) and Chauhan (2011) also reported the same. It can be seen that the rice growers expressed their needs for information about subsidies, insurance and government policies related to rice cultivation.

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