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INFORMATION MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOUR OF MAIZE GROWERS OF PERAMBALUR DISTRICT

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Abstract : The information management behaviour has been conceptualised as a composite measure of information seeking, evaluation, preservation, utilisation and dissemination behaviour of the individual respondents and each dimension of information management behaviour was analysed under selected agriculture operations and the respondents selected for study were such that by performing all these four major operations they do cultivation. The study was taken-up in Perambalur district of Tamil Nadu. Out of the four blocks in Perambalur district, Veppanthattai block was selected based on the maximum area under maize cultivation. A sample size of 120 maize cultivating farmers was selected by using proportionate random sampling technique. Information acquisition and information processing were grouped under high. Whereas, information dissemination and overall information management behaviour were grouped under medium level.

Keywords: Information management behaviour, Information acquisition, Information processing Information dissemination behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

India has long way to achieve self sufficiency in cereals production. In recent years, greater attention is being paid to agriculture for better utilisation and development. Agriculture crops particularly cereals, like maize have greater export potential and can earn foreign exchange in sizeable quantum and also can meet the consumer demand if the existing resources are tapped to the fullest extent. Maize farmers confront many serious challenges that include infrastructure constraints, supply chain inefficiencies and significant problems in the diffusion and access to information. Information is viewed as a resource like land, labour and capital. It is not a free good. It must be obtained, processed, stored, retrieved, manipulated, analysed and put into use. The terms data and information are used interchangeably, but they refer to two distinct concepts. Adoption of improved agricultural technology by maize growers mainly depends on effective utilization of sources of agricultural information and channels to which they are exposed directly or indirectly. Because of lack of awareness and through knowledge about these technologies, it is observed that improved agricultural technologies are available but that technologies are not reaching to the maize growers in adoptable form for better crop yield. This gap may partially to be filled by use of various sources of information viz., personal localite, cosmopoliteness, mass media exposure, commercial agencies and non-government organizations, which are chief sources to get agricultural information. It is known that, adoption of improved maize cultivation practices varies farmer to farmer depending upon their situation, availability of information sources and use of communication media to obtain latest

information. Therefore, the present study has been undertaken to know various sources utilised by maize growers to get agricultural information.

METHODOLOGY

The study was taken-up in Perambalur district of Tamil Nadu. Out of the four blocks in Perambalur district, Veppanthattai block was selected based on the maximum area under maize cultivation. A sample size of 120 maize cultivating farmers was selected by using proportionate random sampling technique. The agricultural information management was operationalised as the process of identifying and collection of information on agricultural technologies of origin, storing, updating and retrieving, it whenever necessary to process manipulate and disseminate the processed information to various users at the time they can most efficiently use it. Suitable measurements were determined to quantify the independent variables selected for the study. An inventory on agricultural information management behaviour, a dependent variable was developed and measured on a response continuum as 'Regularly', 'Frequently', 'Occasionally' and 'Never' with scoring of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The required data were collected by personal interview utilising a well structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The collected data were tabulated and analysised using appropriate statistical tools.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Overall information management behaviour of maize growers.

The data on overall information management behaviour adopted by the farmer are presented in Table-1. Farmers were categorised into three levels viz., low, medium and high based on information acquisition behaviour, information processing behaviour, information dissemination behaviour and overall information management behaviours, the results are presented in Table-1.

Table-1. Distribution of respondents based on their overall information management behaviour.

(n=120)

S. No.	Category	IAB		IPB		IDB		IMB	
		No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent
1	Low	35	29.17	30	25.00	32	26.67	27	22.50
2	Medium	40	33.33	42	35.00	68	56.66	70	58.33
3	High	45	37.50	48	40.00	20	16.67	23	19.17
Total		**120**	**100.00**	**120**	**100.00**	**120**	**100.00**	**120**	**100.00**

It could be observed from the Table-1, that majority of the respondents (35.00 per cent) had high level of information acquisition behaviour followed by one-third of the respondents (33.33 per cent) had medium level of information acquisition behaviour and nearly thirty per cent of the respondents (29.17 per cent) had low level of information acquisition behaviour.

Regarding information processing behaviour, forty per cent of the respondents (40.00 per cent) belonged to high level of information processing followed by 35.00 per cent of the respondents belonged to medium and

one-fourth of the respondents (25.00 per cent) were low level category.

With respect to information dissemination behaviour, more than fifty per cent of the respondents (56.66 per cent) were found under medium level of information dissemination behaviour followed by low (26.67 per cent) and high (16.67 per cent) level categories respectively.

A perusal of overall information management behaviour revealed that nearly sixty per cent of the respondents (58.33 per cent) were observed under medium category and the rest were almost distributed under low (22.50 per cent) and high (19.17 per cent) categories.

It could be concluded from the table that majority of the respondents, information acquisition and information processing were grouped under high category. Whereas, information dissemination and overall information management behaviour were grouped under medium level category. This result is in agreement with the results of Kalidasan (2008) who also reported that majority of the farmers had medium level of information management behaviour in his study on information management behaviour in agriculture.

Information acquisition behaviour

The personal localite, personal cosmopolite and impersonal cosmopolite channels used by farmers for the acquisition of information with regard to maize cultivation. Hence, the respondents were enquired about their information acquisition behaviour and the results are presented in Table-2 to 4.

Personal-localite channels

The data collected on information acquisition behaviour through personal-localite channels are presented in Table-2.Table-2. Information acquisition through personel-localite channels by the respondents

(n=120)

S. No.	Personal-localite channels	Regularity of contact							
		Regularly		Occasionally		Rarely		Never	
		No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent
1	Discussion with family members	75	62.50	30	25.00	15	12.50	-	-
2	Friends and relatives	63	52.50	26	21.66	20	16.67	11	9.17
3	Neighbours/fellow farmers	66	55.00	38	31.67	16	13.33	-	-
4	Progressive farmers	39	32.50	51	42.50	20	16.67	10	8.33
5	Private input dealers	15	12.50	35	29.17	45	37.50	25	20.83

It could be noticed from the Table-2, that the respondents regularly utilised source were discussion with family members (62.50 per cent) followed by neighbours/fellow farmers (55.00 per cent) and friends and relatives (52.50 per cent). Whereas 42.50 per cent of the respondents utilised progressive farmers occasionally and more than one-third of the respondents (37.50 per cent) acquiring information through private input dealers rarely. This findings revealed that most commonly used personal-localite channels for information acquisition by the respondents were

family members, neighbours/fellow farmers, friends and relatives. This might be due to the close proximity and frequent interaction.
This findings derives support from that of Patel et al. (2012) who also reported that majority of the respondents had used similar source for information acquisition.

Personal-cosmopolite channels

Various personal-cosmopolite channels used by the respondents for information acquisition are presented in Table-3.

Table-3. Information acquisition through personal-cosmopolite channels by the respondents
(n=120)

S. No.	Personal-cosmopolite channels	Regularity of contact							
		Regularly		Occasionally		Rarely		Never	
		No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent
1	Discussion with Assistant Agricultural Officers	30	25.00	25	20.83	10	8.32	55	45.84
2	Discussion with Agricultural Officers	15	12.50	7	5.84	13	10.83	85	70.83
3	Discussion with Assistant Director of Agriculture	-	-	5	4.17	2	1.66	113	94.17
4	Specialist from University	-	-	7	5.83	5	4.17	108	90.00
5	Scientist from other research station	-	-	10	8.33	15	12.50	95	79.17

The data in Table-3, reveals that assistant agricultural officers (25.00 per cent) were found to be regularly contacted by the respondents and discussion with agricultural officer (12.50 per cent). Whereas, more than three-fourth of the respondents never utilised assistant director of agriculture (94.17 per cent), specialist from university (90.00 per cent) and scientist from other research station (79.17 per cent).

The findings revealed that the most commonly used sources for information acquisition by the respondents were assistant agricultural officer and agricultural officer among personal cosmopolite channels. This might be due to more accessibility and frequent contacts made by them. This finding is in line with the findings of Kalidasan (2008).

Impersonal-cosmopolite channels

The data collected on information acquisition by the respondents through

impersonal-cosmopolite channels are presented in Table-4.

Table-4. Information acquisition through impersonal-cosmopolite channels by the respondents

(n=120)

S. No.	Impersonal-cosmopolite channels	Regularity of contact							
		Regularly		Occasionally		Rarely		Never	
		No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent
1	Farm broadcast	25	20.83	20	16.67	38	31.66	37	30.83
2	Farm telecast	42	35.00	35	29.16	43	35.84	-	-
3	Information materials	17	14.17	25	20.83	33	27.50	45	37.50
4	Agricultural news articles in news papers	7	5.83	13	10.83	25	20.83	75	62.50
5	Agricultural flims/slides	-	-	-	-	3	2.50	117	97.50
6	Farm magazine	3	2.50	12	10.00	30	25.00	75	62.50
7	Agricultural exhibition	14	11.67	28	23.33	37	30.83	41	34.17
8	Tours and field trips	18	15.00	42	35.00	35	29.17	25	20.83
9	Information kiosks	3	2.50	17	14.17	15	12.50	85	70.83

It is evident from the data in Table-4, that viewing farm telecasts (35.00 per cent) followed by listening to farm broadcast (20.83 per cent), tours and field trips (15.00 per cent) and reading information materials (14.17 per cent) were the regularly utilised sources by the respondents for information acquisition. The respondents occasionally used tours and fields trips (35.00 per cent) and agricultural exhibition (23.33 per cent) for acquiring information.

Farm telecast and farm broadcast were the most utilised impersonal-cosmopolite sources by the respondents for acquisition of information. This might be due to greater degree of credibility attached to the farm telecast and farm broadcast sources.

The finding derives support from that of Sridharan (2011) who also reported that similar findings in his research study of information management behaviour of maize growers.

Information processing behaviour

Information evaluation

The data on information evaluation method used by the respondents are presented in Table-5.

Table-5. Evaluation of information by the respondents.

(n=120)

S. No.	Evaluation method	Regularity of contact			
		Regularly	Occasionally	Rarely	Never

		No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent
1	Weighing in the light of past experience	66	55.00	40	33.33	14	11.67	-	-
2	Considering economic feasibility	58	48.33	42	35.00	10	8.33	-	-
3	Advantages of the message	46	38.33	32	26.67	22	18.33	20	16.67
4	Degree of complexity	21	17.50	29	24.17	29	24.17	41	34.16
5	Degree of compatibility	44	36.67	32	26.67	28	23.33	16	13.33
6	Technological feasibility	22	18.33	18	15.00	50	41.67	30	25.00
7	Degree of triability	38	31.67	25	20.83	28	23.33	29	24.17

It could be observed from the Table-5, that weighing in the light of past experience (55.00 per cent) followed by considering economic feasibility (48.33 per cent), advantages of the message (38.33 per cent), degree of compatibility (36.67 per cent) and degree of triability (31.67 per cent) were the regularly considered methods for evaluation of information.

Weighing in the light of past experience and considering the economic feasibility were widely considered aspects for processing of information by majority of the respondents. It is quite natural, that respondents always considered their past experience and the feasibility of technology while accepting the innovations.

Information treatment

The data collected on information treatment by the respondents are presented in Table-6.

Table-6. Treatment of information by the respondents.

(n=120)

S. No.	Method of treatment	Regularity of contact							
		Regularly		Occasionally		Rarely		Never	
		No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent
1	Consulting scientists	15	12.50	45	37.50	40	33.33	20	16.67
2	Consulting the extension staff of department of agriculture	32	26.67	50	41.67	10	8.33	28	23.33
3	Discussion with progressive farmers	45	37.50	40	33.33	20	16.67	15	12.50
4	Discussion with friends and relatives	62	51.67	40	33.33	18	15.00	-	-

5	Conducting demonstration	14	11.67	32	26.67	64	53.33	10	8.33
6	Cross checking with past experience	75	62.50	45	37.50	-	-	-	-

From Table-6, it is clear that a majority of the respondents were found to treat the information regularly by cross checking with past experience (62.50 per cent) followed by discussion with friends and relatives (51.67 per cent) and discussion with progressive farmers (37.50 per cent).

The most frequently used methods for information treatment were cross checking with past experience and discussion with friends and relatives. Treating the information by cross checking with past experience and consulting the friends and relatives is in conformity with the findings of Raman (2014).

Information storage

The data on information storage by the respondents while processing the information are presented in Table-7.

Table-7. Storage of information by the respondents

(n=120)

S. No.	Method of storage	Regularity of contact							
		Regularly		Occasionally		Rarely		Never	
		No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent
1	Taking hints in a note book and preserve	12	10.00	28	23.33	42	35.00	38	31.67
2	By preserving information materials like booklets/leaflets etc.,	37	30.83	25	20.83	32	26.67	26	21.67
3	By memorizing	60	50.00	39	32.50	10	8.33	11	9.17
4	By recording in audio/video cassettes	-	-	-	-	7	5.83	113	94.17
5	By xeroxing and preserving	-	-	-	-	20	16.67	100	83.33

It could be observed from Table-7, that a majority of the respondents stored the information regularly by memorizing (50.00 per cent) followed by preserving information materials like booklets, leaflets etc., (30.83 per cent) and taking hints in a note book and preserve (10.00 per cent). It is interestingly to note that most of the respondents never store the information through by recording in audio/video cassettes (94.17 per cent) and by xeroxing and preserving (83.33 per cent). Memorizing was the most used method of preservation of information by the respondents. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Sridharan (2011).

Information dissemination behaviour

The data collected on information dissemination behaviour of the respondents are presented in Table-8.

Table-8. Information dissemination behaviour of the respondents

(n=120)

S. No.	Source	Regularity of contact							
		Regularly		Occasionally		Rarely		Never	
		No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent	No	Per cent
I.	**Individual contact**								
1.	Farm and home visits	42	35.00	48	40.00	20	16.67	10	8.33
2.	Telephone calls	56	46.67	42	35.00	22	18.33	-	-
3.	Discussion with progressive farmers	36	30.00	45	37.50	25	20.83	14	11.67
II.	**Group contact**								
1.	Participating in demonstration trials	8	6.67	12	10.00	34	28.33	66	55.00
2.	Group discussions	30	25.00	55	45.83	15	12.50	20	16.67
3.	Group meeting	10	8.33	40	33.34	18	15.00	52	43.33
4.	Farmers training programmes	25	20.83	35	29.17	12	10.00	48	40.00
5.	Field trips/study tours	19	15.83	12	10.00	35	29.17	54	45.00
6.	Field visits	12	10.00	21	17.50	36	30.00	51	42.50
III.	**Mass contact**								
1.	Distribution of information materials to other farmers.	14	11.67	20	16.67	34	28.33	52	43.33
2.	Farmers day	36	30.00	20	16.67	18	15.00	46	38.33
3.	Radio programmes	4	3.33	26	21.67	20	16.67	70	58.33
4.	Activities of voluntary organisation	-	-	-	-	22	18.33	98	81.67
5.	Agricultural exhibitions	43	35.83	25	20.83	32	26.67	20	16.67

6.	Writing in news papers	-	-	-	-	-	-	120	100.00
7.	Attending to slide/film shows	-	-	-	-	-	-	120	100.00
8.	TV programmes	-	-	30	25.00	40	33.33	50	41.67

With regard to individual contact methods, the data in Table-8, shows that majority of the respondents regularly made a telephone call for farmers (46.67 per cent) followed by visited neighbouring farm and home (35.00 per cent) and discussion with progressive farmers (30.00 per cent) to disseminate the information on maize technologies.

With respect to group contact methods, the regularly utilised sources were group discussion (25.00 per cent) followed by training programmes (20.83 per cent) and field trips and study tours (15.83 per cent). Whereas 45.83 per cent and 33.34 per cent of the respondents occasionally used the group discussion and group meetings respectively.

In case of mass contact methods, it is evident from the Table-8, that agricultural exhibition (35.83 per cent) and farmer's day (30.00 per cent) were utilised regularly. None of the respondents attending the slide/film shows and writing in news papers for information dissemination.

Farm and home visits, discussion with progressive farmers and visited neighbouring farm and home were the three individual contact methods regularly used by the respondents for providing feedback to researcher and extension workers for passing information to other farmers. Group discussion and participated in demonstrations were the group contact methods extensively used by the respondents for information dissemination. Agricultural exhibitions and farmer's day were the regularly used mass contact methods for information dissemination to researchers, extension workers and other farmers. This finding is in line with the findings of Satheehkumar (2013).

CONCLUSION

''Agricultural officer'' were regularly used as their major channel by the maize growers for information acquisition. It is therefore, necessitates that development officers and neighbours should be with the latest farm practices on maize technologies. Who can be the great asses for the quick and effective dissemination behaviour. Similarly farm telecast programmes must be prepared in collaboration with the scientists involved in maize researcher and extension personnel in simple language with suitable to the agro-climatic, socio-psychological and day-to-day requirements of the maize growers. It is suggested that the organising more training programmes enabled the farmers to obtain the latest information and equip themselves with necessary knowledge and skills.

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