

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BEHAVIOUR (IDB) OF SUGARCANE GROWERS

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Abstract

The past experience of the extension system revealed that the communication of agricultural information was inefficient and ineffective, leading to an increased gap between innovation in the lab and the adoption in the fields by the farmers. Therefore, the concept of information management behaviour of the personnel involved in the three systems gains significance. This calls for the study of information management behaviour of the three systems engaged in development and transfer of sugarcane technologies. So far no systematic study has been conducted in this area. The study was conducted in cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. Sixty farmers involved in the generation, dissemination and utilisation of sugar cane technologies formed the sample for the study. Appropriate statistical tools were used to measure the variables. The technological feasibility of sugarcane technologies was considered for information evaluation, whereas cross – checking past experience for information treatment and memorizing for information storage were considered regularly by the extensionists. Farm and home visits was the regularly utilized source for information dissemination.

Key words: Information dissemination behavior, information management behaviour and Clientele system.

Introduction

India has a long history of cane growing. The growth of Indian sugar industry has been fairly steady and rapid since 1930. In the early years, sugarcane varieties did not possess good milling quality, yields per unit area was low and sucrose content of juice was poor. This was overcome by researches carried out by Sugarcane Breeding Institutes (SBI) and Plant breeding scientists around the world.

The aim of the sugarcane breeder is to improve the productivity through evolving varieties which has good content of sucrose, resistant to disease, tolerant to adverse climatic conditions and above all one that is more efficient producer of biomass and provide stable yields in relation to human needs. Although, literature on the dissemination of information and pattern of its flow exist, number of critical problems particularly related to the information management behaviour among research, extension and client systems remains to be understood.

Information related to agriculture has reached the explosion stage and it still keeps on proliferating at a faster rate and is changing at every point of time. Information form is complex in agricultural development process because the information has to pass through different systems viz., research, extension and eventually to the clients. Though there exists many factors responsible for the technological and production gaps, the farmers' ignorance and lack of knowledge and skill on the modern agricultural technology and its possibility and potential has become crucial and is impeding the agricultural progress.

Wide spread efforts were made to reduce the information gap by introducing different information flow strategies. Studies have shown that clients utilize the agricultural information to an extent of 18-40 per cent (Kishore, 1986). Several studies on information utilisation over the years have attempted to explain the information use phenomena, to understand information use behaviour and to improve information use by manipulating essential conditions. It is remarkable that very little attention has been given to the transformation of information. Occurrence of distortion and loss of information is well known. Gelia Castillo (1983) has quoted the following example from Nepal.

Research Methodology

It was decided to have a sample size of sixty sugarcane registered farmers as that of researchers and extensionists based on random sampling procedure. Among sixty farmers, thirty registered farmers of M.R.K Co-operative sugar factory were selected from the villages situated nearer to the sugarcane research station, Cuddalore. Accordingly, two villages viz., Srimushnam and Solatharam of Keerpalayam block which had the maximum area under sugarcane cultivation as well as with highest number of registered farmers of M.R.K Co-operative sugar factory were selected. Accordingly, fifteen sugarcane farmers were selected at random from each of the villages. The same procedure was followed for the selection of registered sugarcane farmers of EID Parry (India) Ltd, Nellikuppam. Fifteen registered sugarcane farmers were selected from each of the selected villages viz., Valayamadevi and Annagramam of Annagramam block.

The dissemination of information to subordinates and farmers and transmission of farm problems to higher officials or researchers. In this study information dissemination behaviour referred to all the activities performed by the respondents for disseminating of scientific and technical information on sugarcane technologies Information dissemination behaviour was measured as the regularity in the extent of use of individual, group and mass contact methods Sheela Immanuel (2004).

The scores obtained on various information dissemination methods were added to get the total score of respondents on this variable. The respondents were classified into three categories based on cumulative frequency method.

Findings and Discussion

Information dissemination behaviour

The data collected on information dissemination behaviour of farmers are presented in

Table 1.

Table 1. Information dissemination behaviour of farmers

(n=60)

Sl. No.	Methods	Regularity of contact							
		Regularly		Occasionaly		Rarely		Never	
		No.	per cent	No.	per cent	No .	per cent	No .	per cent
I	Individual contact								
1.	Farm and home visits	24	40.00	26	43.33	10	16.67	-	-
2.	Telephone calls	4	6.67	6	10.00	2	3.33	42	80.00
3.	Discussion with progressive farmers	18	30.00	22	36.67	12	20.00	8	13.33
II	Group contact								
1.	Participating in demonstration trials	9	15.00	12	20.00	15	25.00	24	40.00
2.	Group discussions	15	25.00	18	30.00	13	21.67	14	23.33
3.	Group meetings	8	13.33	10	16.67	8	13.33	34	56.67
4.	Farmers training programmes	10	16.67	8	13.33	10	16.67	32	53.33
5.	Field trips / study tours	7	11.67	8	13.33	10	16.67	35	58.33
6.	Field visits	5	8.33	7	11.67	14	23.33	34	56.67
III	Mass contact								
1.	Distribution of information materials to other farmers	13	21.67	12	20.00	10	13.67	25	41.16
2.	Farmers day	15	25.00	12	20.00	8	13.33	25	41.67
3.	Raido programmes	2	3.33	4	6.67	7	11.67	47	78.33

4.	TV programmes	-	-	2	3.33	3	5.00	55	91.67
5.	Activities of voluntary organisations	-	-	-	-	20	33.33	40	66.67
6.	Agricultural exhibition	22	36.66	10	16.67	28	46.67	-	-
7.	Writing to newspapers	2	3.33	4	6.67	4	6.67	50	33.33
8.	Attending to zonal meetings	8	13.33	10	16.67	12	20.00	30	50.00
9.	Attending to slide / film shows	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	100.00

With regard to individual contact methods, the data in Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents regularly visited neighbouring farm and home (40.00 per cent) followed by discussion with progressive farmers (30.00 per cent) to disseminate the information on sugarcane technologies.

With respect to group contact methods, the regularly utilized sources were group discussions (25.00 per cent) followed by demonstration (15.00 per cent), whereas 30.00 per cent of the respondents occasionally used the group discussion. In case of mass contact methods, it is evident from the table that agricultural exhibition (36.67 per cent) and farmers day (25.00 per cent) were utilized regularly. None of the respondents participated in slide shows for information dissemination this finding is in line with the findings of Arunmozhi Devi (2004).

Farm and home visits and discussion with progressive farmers were the two individual contact methods regularly used by the farmers for providing feedback to researchers and extension workers and for passing information to other farmers. Group discussion and participation in demonstrations were the group contact methods extensively used by the farmers 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 findings of Sambhi Reddy (1997).

Summary and Conclusion

Majority of the farmer belonged to medium category (60.00 per cent) of information management behaviour.

Majority of the farmer belonged to high category (55.00 per cent) of information dissemination behaviour.

Cane development officer (50.00 per cent), neighbourers/ fellow farmers (60.00 per cent), viewing farm telecast (33.33 per cent) were the regularly used channels among

personal-cosmopolite, personal-localite and impersonal-cosmopolite channels respectively for information acquisition.

Majority of the farmers regularly evaluated the information by weighing it in the light of past experience (46.67 per cent), whereas they treated the information by cross checking with past experience (58.33 per cent) and stored the information by memorizing (50.00 per cent). Farm and home visits (40.00 per cent), group discussion (25.00 per cent) and agricultural exhibition (36.66 per cent) were the regularly utilized sources for information dissemination.

Clientele system

Cane development officer was the regularly used channels among the farmers for information acquisition. It therefore, necessitates that cane development officer and neighbours should be fed with the latest farm innovations on sugarcane technologies who can be a great asset for the quick and effective dissemination. Similarly farm telecast programmes must be prepared in collaboration with the scientists involved in sugarcane research and extension personnel in simple language suitable to the agro-climatic, socio-psychological and day-to-day requirements of the sugarcane farmers.

With regard to storage of information, memorizing ranked first followed by preserving leaflets and booklets etc. It is therefore suggested that still the farmers depended mostly on their memory. Technology has become so complex that it is difficult to remember every bit of information and there is every possibility of committing mistakes in its utilization. Therefore farmers should be encouraged not to solely depend on memory, but to read the written information materials and to preserve them in audio and video cassettes.

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