

## **Preferential Information Sources of Farmers in Udaipur District of Rajasthan, India on Improved Farm Practices**

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**ABSTRACT.** *Farmers use many information sources and channels for seeking agricultural information on improved farm practices. They may come across large number of information sources and channels but pursue only few of them. The specific objective of the study was to investigate the preferential agricultural information sources and channels of farmers for information seeking. The study was carried out in purposively selected Panchayat samities, Bhinder and Dhariyawad of Udaipur district in Rajasthan (each from non-tribal and tribal areas). From selected two Panchayat Samities, three villages from each Panchayat Samiti were chosen on the basis of maximum area under cultivation of three important crops i.e. wheat, maize and gram. A sample of 120 respondents was drawn randomly and data were collected by personal contact using a specially designed questionnaire. Friends and neighbors were the most utilized personal localite sources of agriculture information. Agriculture supervisor and input dealers were the most preferred personal cosmopolite sources of agriculture information for both non-tribal and tribal respondents. Kisan Mandal meeting and, farmers fair were the preferential personal cosmopolite channels. The tribal farmers most preferred Kissan Mandal meeting whereas farmers fair got the first preference of the non-tribal farmers. Radio, newspaper and television were the most utilized impersonal cosmopolite channels. It is suggested to establish a well equipped agriculture information center in the premises of Kisan Seva Kendra to provide necessary information to the tribal and non-tribal farmers in the area and to arrange media forum groups (radio and television) to discuss the content of radio/television agricultural programs which would enable effective transfer of new technologies.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Agricultural technology is changing fast from conventional methods and techniques to modern scientific methods and techniques. One of the major problems of agricultural development is not the availability of improved agricultural technologies, but the inadequate transfer of technology in adoptable form at the correct time. There is a tremendous gap between knowledge generation and knowledge utilization by the farmers. Knowledge is increasing every day, but its utilization is relatively low. There is a need for rapid transfer of improved farm technologies to the farmers, but to carry information to the farmers throughout the country is a gigantic task.

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Adoption of improved farm practices by the farmers varies from one farmer to another depending upon their situation and availability of information sources. Individuals tend to use different communication sources and channels for obtaining technology. The choice and use of different sources and channels of agricultural information rest on the credibility of the information source or channel. There is a need to know more about preferential information sources and channels of farmers on improved farm practices which would enable effective transfer of technologies. The present study is an attempt to address such issues. The specific objective of the study was to investigate the preferential agricultural information sources and channels of the farmers for information seeking in the study area.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in purposively selected Udaipur district of Southern Rajasthan. Udaipur district was purposively selected for the study because this district comprised of both tribal and non-tribal *Panchayat Samities* which facilitated researcher a better comparison of these two categories of farmers. Udaipur district consists of 7 tribal area *Panchayat Samities* and 4 non-tribal area *Panchayat Samities*. One tribal *Panchayat Samiti* from tribal area (Dharyawad) and one non-tribal *Panchayat Samiti* (Bhinder) from non-tribal area were selected on the basis of maximum area under cultivation of selected key crops (maize, wheat, gram).

Three villages from non-tribal Bhinder *Panchayat Samiti* i.e., Amarpura, Vana, Bansda and three villages from tribal Dharyawad *Panchayat Samiti* i.e., Gadariyawas, Chittordia, Parel were selected on the same criteria followed in the selection of *Panchayat Samities*. A comprehensive list of farmers from each village was prepared and 20 farmers from each village were selected randomly. A total of 120 farmers were selected for the study. A comprehensive interview schedule was developed considering the specific objectives formulated in the study. Individual interview technique was employed for the collection of data from the respondents. The statistical measures like rank and Mean Percent Score (MPS) were used for the analysis. MPS was obtained by multiplying the total score of the respondent by hundred and dividing by the maximum obtainable score under each aspect.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are many sources and channels through which people get information about technological change in farming. So, there is a need to know more about different sources and channels of information through which farmers become aware about the agricultural technologies. With this view, the sources and channels available to farmers for seeking information on improved agricultural practices were studied and presented in Tables 1 to 4.

### Personal localite sources

Friends (MPS 73.33) and neighbours (MPS 70.83) were the major personal localite sources of agriculture information. Agriculture students (MPS 5) were the least preferred information source as perceived by the respondents. Friends were the most utilized personal

localite sources of information in non-tribal villages whereas neighbours got the first preference in tribal villages. The findings are in line with the findings of Chandawat (1997) who reported that progressive cumin growers considered neighbours and friends as their major information sources. Manohari (2002) also observed that tribal farmers were using friends, neighbours and local leaders as their main sources of agriculture information.

**Table 1. Personal localite sources of agriculture information utilized by farmers for seeking information on improved farm practices.**

No.	Source of information	Non-tribal		Tribal		Total	
		MPS	Rank	MPS	Rank	MPS	Rank
1	Progressive farmers	78.30	2	10.00	6	44.00	3
2	Village leaders	33.33	5	13.33	4	29.33	5
3	Friends	90.00	1	56.66	2	73.33	1
4	Neighbours	76.66	3	65.00	1	70.83	2
5	Relatives	35.00	4	35.00	3	35.00	4
6	Agriculture students	5.00	6	5.00	7	5.00	7
7	Religious head	3.33	7	11.66	5	7.50	6

### Personal cosmopolite sources

Agriculture supervisor (MPS 78.3) was the major cosmopolite source of agricultural information. The same trend was observed in both non-tribal and tribal villages. Input dealer (MPS 42.5) and subject matter specialist (MPS 30.0) were accorded second and third rank, respectively. The personnel of voluntary organisations (MPS 2.5) were the least preferred cosmopolite information source in the study area. The findings are in line with findings of Kharade *et al.* (1998) who found that agriculture assistant was the most popular personal cosmopolite source of farm information to groundnut farmers.

Agriculture supervisor being easily accessible to the farmers might have been contacted regularly by both the non-tribal and tribal farmers in the area for seeking information of improved agricultural practices.

**Table 2. Personal cosmopolite sources of agriculture information utilized by the respondents for seeking information on improved farm practices.**

No.	Source of information	Non-tribal		Tribal		Total	
		MPS	Rank	MPS	Rank	MPS	Rank
1	Agriculture Supervisors	93.00	1	63.33	1	78.30	1
2	Subject matter specialists	50.66	3	8.30	3	30.00	3
3	Input dealers	66.66	2	18.33	2	42.50	2
4	Personnel of voluntary organisations	0.00	4	5.00	4	2.50	4

### Personal cosmopolite channels

*Kissan Mandal* meeting (farmers meeting) (MPS 60.83) was the most popular personal cosmopolite channel of agriculture information as perceived by the respondents in the study area. Farmers Fair (MPS 59.6), visit to local *Kisan Seva Kendra* (MPS 41.66) and training were accorded second, third and fourth ranks, respectively. Workshop (MPS 3.33) and educational tour (MPS 2.5) were the least important personal cosmopolite channels of the agricultural information for the respondents.

Thus the *Kissan Mandal* meeting, farmers fair and visit to local *Kisan Seva Kendra* (Agrarian Service Centre) were the three most important personal cosmopolite agriculture information sources to the respondents.

The data in Table 3 indicate that the respondents in non-tribal and tribal villages have used personal cosmopolite channels of agricultural information at different magnitudes for seeking information. The tribal respondents most preferred *Kissan Mandal* meeting while non-tribal respondents most preferred farmer's fair. Perhaps the poor economic condition of tribal farmers might be the cause for their less participation in the farmers' fairs.

The findings are in line with the findings of Agarawal (1998) who reported that *Kissan Mandal* meeting emerged as the top ranked cosmopolite channel in providing information to maize growers in the study area.

**Table 3. Personal cosmopolite channels of agriculture information utilized by the farmer's for seeking information on improved agricultural practices.**

No.	Personal cosmopolite channels	Non-tribal		Tribal		Total	
		MPS	Rank	MPS	Rank	MPS	Rank
1	Training	53.33	3	18.33	5	35.83	4
2	<i>Kissan Mandal</i> meeting	80.00	2	55.00	1	60.83	1
3	Farmer's fair	85.00	1	35.00	3	59.66	2
4	Educational tour	20.00	7	1.60	7	2.30	8
5	Demonstrations (method and result)	48.33	4	13.33	6	30.83	5
6	Local <i>Kissan Seva Kendra</i>	43.30	5	40.00	2	41.66	3
7	Field trip	21.66	6	20.00	4	20.83	6
8	Work shop	5.00	8	1.60	7	3.33	7

### Impersonal cosmopolite channels

Radio (MPS 63.33), newspaper (47.50) television (MPS 32.50) and farm publications (MPS 29.16) were the most preferred impersonal cosmopolite channels of agricultural information as perceived by the respondents in the study area. It was expected that traditional media (puppet, local songs, drama) would be preferred by respondents for seeking agriculture information, but the results clearly indicated that traditional media were

the least preferred impersonal cosmopolite channel among both non-tribal and tribal respondents. Exhibition (MPS 16.60) and email-internet (MPS 6.60) were utilized by few respondents for seeking information about improved agricultural practices in the study area.

The findings are similar to the results of Kharade *et al.* (1998) who reported that radio was the most popular mass contact source of information for bajra growers. It was suggested that the extension workers in the area should arrange media forum groups (radio and television) to discuss the contents of radio/television agricultural program which would enable effective transfer of new technologies.

**Table 4. Impersonal cosmopolite channels of agricultural information utilized by farmer's for seeking information on improved agricultural practices.**

No.	Impersonal cosmopolite channels	Non-tribal		Tribal		Total	
		MPS	Rank	MPS	Rank	MPS	Rank
1	Radio	73.33	1	53.33	1	63.33	1
2	Television	56.66	3	8.33	3	32.50	3
3	News papers	65.00	2	30.00	2	47.50	2
4	Farm publications	51.66	4	6.60	4	29.16	4
5	Traditional media (puppet, local songs, drama)	10.00	7	0.00	7	5.00	7
6	Exhibition	28.33	5	5.00	5	16.66	5
7	Internet	11.60	6	1.66	6	6.66	6

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Friends and neighbours were the most preferred personal localite sources of agricultural information on improved farm practices for both the non-tribal and tribal farmers. It is suggested that efforts should be made to use friends and neighbours to communicate agricultural information for the farmers in the area. Agriculture supervisor was the major personal cosmopolite agricultural information source for both non-tribal and tribal farmers. It is suggested that the authorities should consider filling of existing vacant posts of agriculture supervisors for the well being of farmers in the area. *Kissan Mandal* meeting was rated as the most popular personal composite channel of agriculture information for the farmers. It is recommended to establish a well-equipped agriculture information centre in the premises of local *Kisan Seva Kendra*. This centre should be equipped with radio, television, farm newspapers and agriculture leaflets in order to provide necessary information to farmers in the area.

Radio, newspaper and television were the most preferred impersonal cosmopolite channels as perceived by the respondents. So it is suggested to arrange media forum groups (Radio and Television) to discuss the contents of radio / television agricultural programmes which would enable effective transfer of new technologies.

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