



ISSN: 2249-894X  
 IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631 (UIF)  
 UGC APPROVED JOURNAL NO. 48514  
 VOLUME - 8 | ISSUE - 8 | MAY - 2019



## AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION LITERACY AMONG RURAL COMMUNITY : A CASE STUDY OF BIDAR DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT:

*This study aims to explore the extent of agricultural information literacy of farmers of Bidar District. The study has conducted by using stratified random survey (questionnaire based) of 246 farmers were farming in 10 villages of Bidar district. According to this survey it clearly shows that the farmers need information for various purposes of agricultural activities and what are the different sources of information. It*

*is observed that many of the farmers however, are not well aware of modern techniques for agriculture. And they accordingly use such techniques for cultivation due to some problems. Farmers are moderately satisfied in getting agricultural information and the paper concludes with giving certain recommendations for the improvement of information literacy of the farmers at Bidar District.*

**KEYWORDS:** Information literacy, Farmers, Agricultural information

### INTRODUCTION

India is a one of the developed country, majority of the population lives in rural areas, and most of them are employed in agriculture sector. Most of the farmers in agriculture sector are well educated, even they are not aware of tools and techniques of modern agriculture system. This study aims at exploring the extent of the agricultural information literacy of farmers in India with particular emphasis on Bidar district agriculture. Information plays an important role in every field of development

process. With the wide and rapid application of computers in every field, information literacy becomes an essential knowledge of lifelong learning program. The concept of information literacy first coined by Paul Zerkowaski in 1974 .Zerkowaski used the word to describe the techniques and skills (Wikipedia). information literacy is a set of ability to identify information needs, seek out resources to meet user's needs and analyze, evaluate, locate and use the needed information in a proper way.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This paper is entitled

'Agricultural Information Literacy among Rural Community: A Case Study of Bidar District.

### NEED FOR THE STUDY

The study is undertaken for the purpose of investigating the information needs of farmers. To explore such obstacles facing from farmers to get information. Now day's information resources play very important role in updating farmer's knowledge & applying new techniques in farming. So the present investigation is undertaken to know the awareness & use of information resources by the farmers of the

Bidar district.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

Main objectives of the present study are:

- To study the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Farmers
- To identify the information needs of the Farmers.
- To find out gender wise differences in information needs of farmers
- To identify the information sources used to find the information they need.
- To find out the criteria they use in evaluation of information they found.
- To identify different information sources used in different stages of agricultural activities by Farmers.
- To identify the extent of use of these sources of information.
- To find out the problems faced in the identifying, accessing, evaluating and utilizing the required information.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present study is exploratory in nature and it adopted a questionnaire -based survey of selected farmers. A total no of 246 farmers engaged in agricultural activities, were selected from 10 villages of Bidar district. Most of the farmers not well educated, data were collected through personal contact findings of the study were statistically analyzed.

**HYPOTHESIS**

There is a strong association between educational qualification of the formers and their level of information literacy.

**STUDY RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

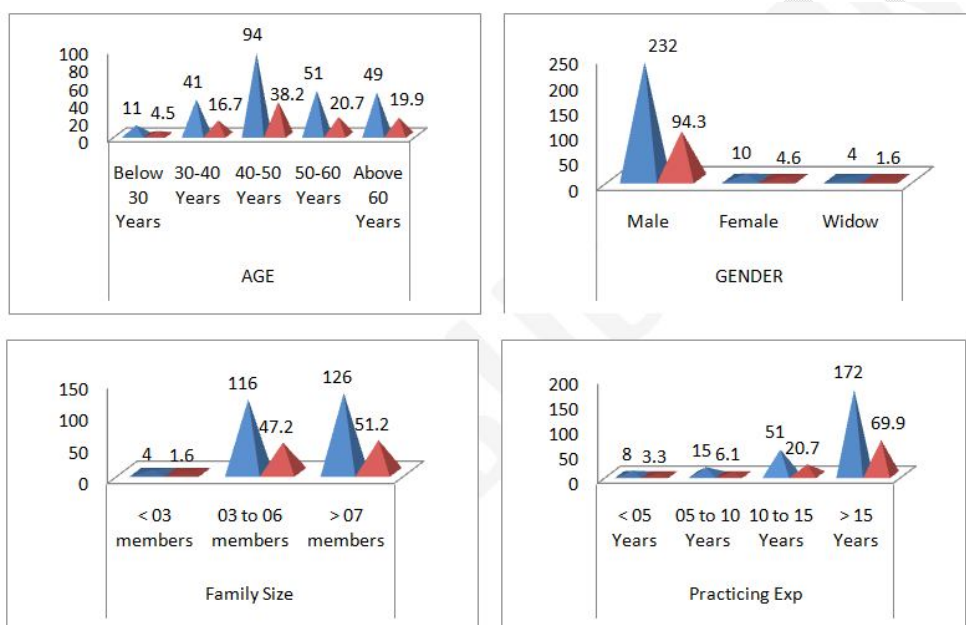
**1) Respondents profile of rural farmers in Bidar District. India**

Table 01 indicates that about 38 percent of the rural farmers are in-between 40 to 50 years of age which implies that most of the rural farmers are in their active age and is found to be a factor that can also significantly improves productivity; this is in consonance with the finding of Eamin and Md. Roknuzzaman (2012). Table 01 further shows that 94 percent of rural farmers are male with 5 percent of female farmers and only negligible 1.6 percent of widow farmers are seen and also indicates, family sizes were large, about 51 percent had greater than 07 members in a family, followed by 47 percent had in-between 03 to 06 members in family and a very few 1.6 percent had less than 03 members in a family, the study thus suggests that famers may choose to have large families in order to access labour for agriculture. Furthermore 70 percent of farmers had greater than 15 years of farming experience followed by 20 percent of farmers in between 10 to 15 years of farming experience, thus it is expected that with increasing years of farming, rural farmers gain experience in farming to the advantage of increasing agricultural productivity. Table 01 related bar graphs are seen in figure 01

**Table 01: Respondents profile of rural farmers in Bidar, India.**

Attributes		No. of farmers (N=246)	Percentage
AGE	Below 30 Years	11	4.5
	30-40 Years	41	16.7
	40-50 Years	94	38.2
	50-60 Years	51	20.7
	Above 60 Years	49	19.9
	N =	246	100
GENDER	Male	232	94.3

	Female	10	4.6
	Widow	4	1.6
	N =	246	100
Family Size	< 03 members	4	1.6
	03 to 06 members	116	47.2
	> 07 members	126	51.2
	N =	246	100
Practicing Experience	< 05 Years	8	3.3
	05 to 10 Years	15	6.1
	10 to 15 Years	51	20.7
	> 15 Years	172	69.9
	N =	246	100



**Table 01: Bar graph showing attributes of respondents Age, Gender, Family size and Experience**

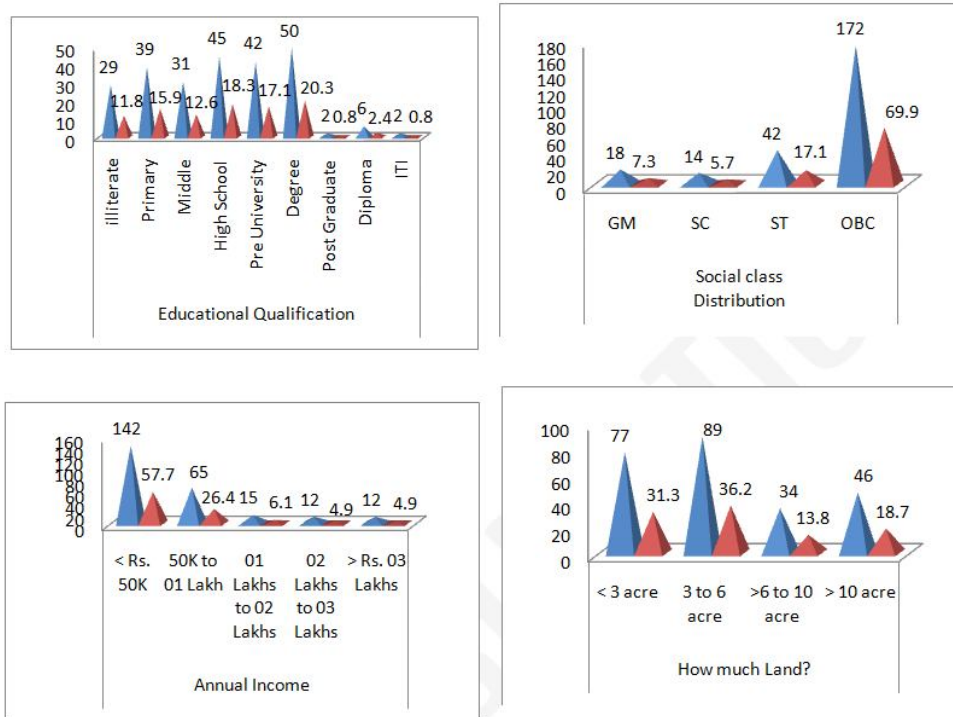
**2) Education, Socio-Economic Agricultural information of rural farmers in Bidar District, India**

Table 02 indicates that about 20 percent of rural farmers are completed degree course followed by 18 percent of farmers completed matriculation, 17 percent of farmers completed pre-university education and very few farmers of 0.8 percent completed post-graduation and ITI respectively, this implies that most of the rural farmers are degree holders and is found to be the factor that can access agricultural sources of information more easily. Table 02 further shows that 70 percent of farmer’s social class distribution is from other backward class followed by 17 percent of farmers from scheduled tribes and 5.7 percent of farmers from scheduled caste whereas general category farmers are about 7 percent. From Table 02 annual incomes of farmers less than 50 thousand are 58 percent followed by 26 percent of income from 50 thousand to 01 lakh, 6.1 percent of farmers income is in-between 01 to 02 lakhs and 4.9 percent of farmers have income 02 to 03 lakhs and greater than 03 lakhs respectively. Furthermore 36 percent of farmers have the agriculture land 03 to 06 acres followed by 31 percent have less than 03 acre, 19 percent of farmers have greater than 10 acre agricultural land and 14 percent

of farmers have in-between 06 to 10 acre, which implies maximum number of rural farmers owned minimum 03 to 06 acres of agricultural land for cultivation in Bidar Dist. India.

**Table 02: Education, Socio-Economic Agricultural information of rural farmers in Bidar District, India**

Attributes		No. of farmers (N=246)	Percentage
Educational Qualification	illiterate	29	11.8
	Primary	39	15.9
	Middle	31	12.6
	High School	45	18.3
	Pre University	42	17.1
	Degree	50	20.3
	Post Graduate	2	0.8
	Diploma	6	2.4
	ITI	2	0.8
	N=	246	100
Social class Distribution	GM	18	7.3
	SC	14	5.7
	ST	42	17.1
	OBC	172	69.9
		N=	246
Annual Income	< Rs. 50K	142	57.7
	50K to 01 Lakh	65	26.4
	01 Lakhs to 02 Lakhs	15	6.1
	02 Lakhs to 03 Lakhs	12	4.9
	> Rs. 03 Lakhs	12	4.9
		N=	246
How much Land?	< 3 acre	77	31.3
	3 to 6 acre	89	36.2
	>6 to 10 acre	34	13.8
	> 10 acre	46	18.7
		N=	246



**Figure 02: Bar graph showing respondents Education, Social class, Annual Income and How much Land?**

**3) Mode of marketing agricultural products in Bidar District, India**

The process of agricultural marketing involves assembling, storage, transportation, processing, grading and the distribution of the various agricultural products across Bidar district. Agricultural marketing thus can best be defined as series of services involved in moving a product from the point of production to the point of consumption. Agricultural marketing is a series of inter-connected activities involving: planning production, growing and harvesting, grading, packing. Table 03 illustrates marketing agricultural products in Bidar district; rank-1 is assigned to part of produce immediately after harvest and remaining after some time, followed by rank-2 as marketing of agricultural product immediately after harvesting, rank-3 as marketing is done after four months of harvesting and finally rank-4 is given to marketing of agricultural products after two months of harvesting according to survey. Thus it is given more importance for marketing of agricultural product for part of produce immediately after harvest and remaining after some time as top priority as per its ranking

**Table 03: Mode of marketing of agricultural products in Bidar District, India**

	SA	A	SA	UD	NA	Total score	Mean	Rank
Immediately after harvesting	4	2	7	67	166	1127	4.58	2
	1.6	0.8	2.8	27.2	67.5			
After two months	6	4	0	73	163	1121	4.55	4
	2.4	1.6	0	29.7	66.3			
After four months	6	1	2	73	164	1126	4.57	3
	2.4	0.4	0.8	29.7	66.7			
Part of produce immediately after harvest and remaining after some time.	6	0	0	75	165	1131	4.59	1
	2.4	0	0	30.5	67.1			

**4) Major problems encountered by farmers while getting information in Bidar District, India**

Farmer is a person engaged in agriculture, raising living organisms for food or raw materials. A farmer will raise crops to market for consumption, medical use, animal food production, and the growing herbal industry. A farmer in this field will be responsible for the planting, fertilization, and harvesting of the crops, as well as transport to the proper production elevators for sale at harvest. Table 04 indicates major problems encountered by farmers while getting information. From the study it is understood that rank-1 is secured by low level of income, followed by in-accessibility to rural areas by NGO's as rank-2, high rate of illiteracy as rank-3, rank-4 as ignorance of government responsibility, next come lack of rural electrification as rank-5, rank-6 as inadequate contact to extension agent, rank-7 is inadequate market information, rank-8 as lack of personal interest & special knowledge, agriculture information on radio & TV is always aired at odd hours as rank-9 and finally rank-10 is assigned for inability to access formed channel of information. Thus it can strongly be concluded that low level of income is the only major problem encountered by farmers while getting the information

**Table 04: Major problems encountered by farmers while getting information in Bidar Districts, India**

Rank	NS	LS	N	S	HS	TS	Mean
1 <sup>st</sup> Rank (Low level of Income)	295.4	14.1	3.0	5.4	29.5	347	1.41056
10 <sup>th</sup> Rank (Inability to access formed channel of Information)	270.0	28.9	3.2	14.9	9.3	326	1.32642
8 <sup>th</sup> Rank (Lack of personal interest & special knowledge)	278.9	23.4	2.08	16.7	10.3	332	1.34959
6 <sup>th</sup> Rank (Inadequate contact to extension agent)	260.0	16.5	3.0	18.3	40.6	338	1.37398
3 <sup>rd</sup> Rank (High Rate of illiteracy)	198.3	38	37.9	45	26.7	345	1.40243
5 <sup>th</sup> Rank (Lack of rural electrification)	275.9	33.8	6.5	21.3	3.2	340	1.38211
9 <sup>th</sup> Rank (Agriculture information on radio & TV is always aired at odd hours)	246.0	30.3	7.8	13.5	29.9	328	1.33333
2 <sup>nd</sup> Rank (In accessibility to rural areas by the NGO's)	187.1	49.2	11.3	53.4	45	346	1.40650
4 <sup>th</sup> Rank (Ignorance of Government responsibility)	318.5	12.1	2.8	2.1	5.4	341	1.38617
7 <sup>th</sup> Rank (Inadequate market information)	280.0	5.0	4.6	15.9	30.3	336	1.36585

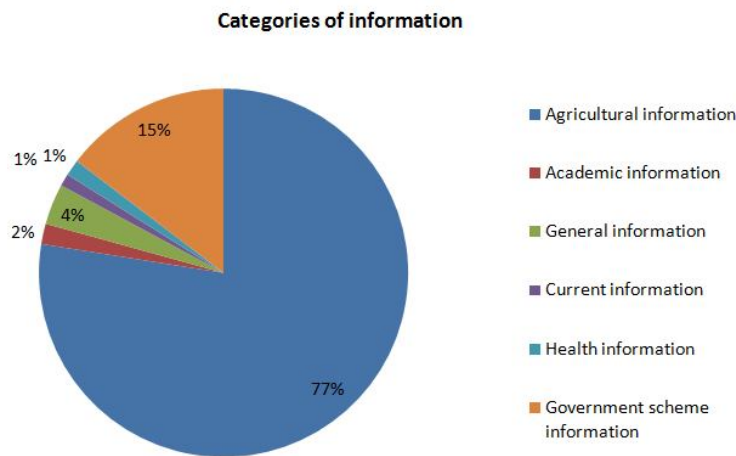
\*NS= Not Significant, LS= Least Significant, N= Neutral, S= Significant, HS= High Significant

**5) Type of information required by farmers in Bidar District, India**

Table 05 indicates need for different categories of information, 0.1 percent respondents need health information, followed by 0.2 percent respondents need academic information, 0.6 percent of respondents needs current information, 4.0 percent respondents need general information, 88.2 percent respondent’s needs agricultural information and 16.6 percent respondents needs about government scheme information. Thus maximum respondents according to survey need agricultural information. Agricultural information interacts with and influences agricultural productivity in a variety of ways. It can help inform decisions regarding land, labour, livestock, capital and management. Agricultural productivity can arguably be improved by relevant, reliable and useful information and knowledge. Its corresponding pie-chart is shown if figure 03.

**Table 05: Type of information required by farmers in Bidar District, India**

Categories of information	Frequency	Percent
Agricultural information	217	88.20%
Academic information	5	0.20%
General information	10	4.00%
Current information	3	0.60%
Health information	4	0.10%
Government scheme information	41	16.60%



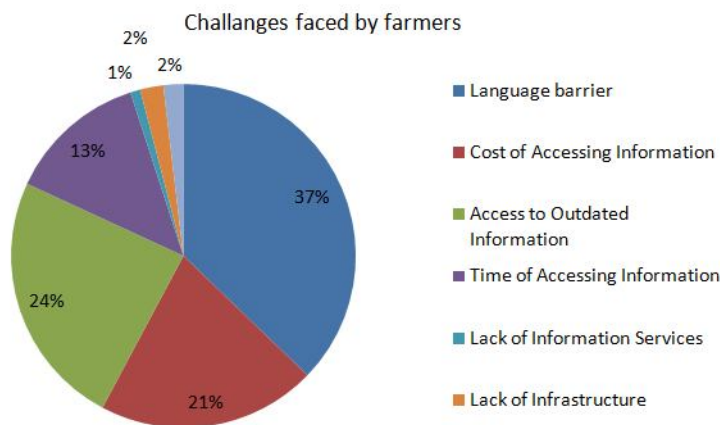
**Figure 05: Pie chart showing categories of information required by farmers in Bidar District**

**6) Challenges faced by farmers in accessing agricultural information in Bidar District, India**

Table 06 indicates that 1.5 percent of respondents face lack of information services, followed by 2.4 percent of respondents face lack of power. 03 percent of respondents face lack of infrastructure. 17.1 percent respondents face lack of time for accessing information. 27 percent respondents face cost of accessing information. 31.4 percent respondents face access to outdated information and finally maximum no of 49 percent respondents facing language barrier in accessing agricultural information. Therefore it is concluded that maximum percent of farmers are facing language barrier as major challenge in accessing agriculture information in Bidar District, India. Its corresponding pie-chart is shown if figure 04.

**Table 06: Challenges faced by farmers in accessing agricultural information in Bidar District,**

Responses	Percent	Percent case
Language barrier	119	48.60%
Cost of Accessing Information	66	26.90%
Access to Outdated Information	77	31.40%
Time of Accessing Information	42	17.10%
Lack of Information Services	3	1.20%
Lack of Infrastructure	7	2.90%
Lack of Power	6	2.40%



**Figure 06: Pie chart showing challenges faced by farmers in Bidar District.**

**SUGGESTIONS CONCLUSION**

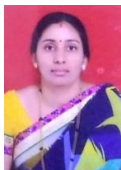
- 1) As Government developed many mobile applications for convenient use of farmers. But farmers are lagging behind proper usage of developed applications. So it is suggested local government to provide farming and development sessions for proper usage of these mobile applications.
- 2) From the survey we came across maximum respondents are degree holders and very negligible percent of farmers are postgraduate and ITI respectively so if it is suggested to have a awareness session to intercommunicate with literate and illiterate farmers for sharing the agricultural related information for significant development of agricultural producers.

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