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THE REQUIREMENT OF KNOWLEDGE TO RURAL FARMERS IN MAHARASHTRA: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT:

At present, knowledge is a primary requirement of everyday life. For whatever and every where knowledge is required. Knowledge can be achieved or retrieved froma variety of sources. Farmers compose a particular group of users whose knowledge requirements is very clear-cut. The present paper allots with the knowledge requirements of the farmer groups in rural areas. The study conducted through survey method and reveals that 71 (40.58%) farmers require daily knowledge forvarious agriculture works. It is additionally found that the first choice sources of the knowledge of the farmers are colleague or fellow farmers following by newspapers and Government office.

KEYWORDS: *Knowledge, Knowledge Requirements, Indian Farmers, Rural Farmers, etc.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The current age has been fairly called as a Knowledge Age. Knowledge hasbecome the verycrucial element for progress in society. Allot to Kemp"knowledge has been described as the fifth requirement of man ranking after air, water, food and shelter". Every body requires knowledgenearby everything even in his day today life.In agriculture environment, appropriate and timely knowledge support farmer's community to take right decision to sustained growth of agriculture activity. Service of knowledge in agriculture area is boost farming productivity in a numberof ways. Providing knowledge on weather trends, best practice in farming, timely access to market knowledge helps farmer make right decisions relating to what cropsto plants and where to sell their product and buy inputs.India is an agriculture situated country with farming and connected activities constituting to a huge chunk of the GDP and employment. According to Malhan & Rao (2007), the Indian agriculture sector provides employment to about 65% of thelabour make, accounts for 27% of the GDP and assists 21% of entire exportsand provides raw material to many industries. Hence knowledge is astrong tool in focus on the agricultural requirements and if it is used properly it couldbe change nations economic.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

The study is carried out in Omerga tehsil. The town of Omerga is situated on National Highway 9 (Pune to

Hyderabad). It is located 85 km by road east of the city of Solapur, 95 km by road from the district capital of Osmanabad, and 20 km west of the Karnataka-Maharashtra State boundary. A brief description of the demographic knowledge of the state, district and tahasil (subdistrict)provides the background and context of the study.

2.1 Maharashtra:

Maharashtra is the third biggest state about the geographical area and second largest state in respect of population in India. The state is renowned for Industrial sector and Mumbai, its capital which is also known as financial capital of India. Itis located in the northern center part of India, surrounded by the Arabian sea in thewest, Gujarat and the Union territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli to the northwest,Madhya Pradesh to the northeast, Chhattisgarh to the east, Karnataka and AndhraPradesh to the south, and Goa to the southwest. The rare feature of the state is aseries of crowning plateau which is lying among the Arabian Sea and theSahayadri range, Konkan is close coastal lowland and Satpura hills along thenorthern border and Bhamragad-Chiroli-Gaikhuri ranges on the eastern border.Maharashtra state is include 35 districts which are ranked into six divisions foradministrative purpose. As per the 2011 census, Maharashtra has a population of112,372,972 enlist a population density of 365 per sq. kms. Out of the totalpopulation males constitute 58.3 million and females constitute 54.0 million.

2.2 Osmanabad District:

Osmanabad district lies in the southern division of state. It lies on the Deccan plateau, about 600 m above sea level. Behalf of the Manjira and Terna River flow through the district. The district is located on the east side of the Marathwada region between latitude 17.35 to 18.40 degrees north, and latitude 75.16 to 76.40 degrees east.

The city of Osmanabad has an elevation of 653 metres (2,142 ft). Osmanabad city is located in the west central part of OsmanabadTahsil, but relatively central for the district as a whole. Tuljapur, Bhoom, Paranda, Washi, and Kalamb are the nearby towns. Solapur, located southwest of Osmanabad in Solapur district, is the nearest sizable city.Osmanabad is on BalaghatPathar. Bhogavatiriver flows through the city & meets Sina River near Mohol in Solapur district.

In the 2011 Indian census, the city of Osmanabad had 106,644 inhabitants, with 41,982 males (52.1%) and 38,643 females (47.9%), for a gender ratio of 920 females per thousand males. In 2001, Osmanabad had an average literacy rate of 74%, higher than the national average of 59.5%, male literacy was 80%, and female literacy was 67%. In 2001 in Osmanabad, 14% of the population was under 6 years of age.

Agriculture isthe main occupation of the people in the district with about 74 % of thepopulation depending on it. It also records for the major share of theireconomic activity.

2.3 Omerga:

Omerga Tahsil is a tahsil/taluka (subdistrict) in Osmanabad district, Maharashtra on the Deccan Plateau of India. The town of Omerga is the administrative headquarters of the tahsil. There are 79 panchayat villages in OmergaTahsil.

In the 2001 Indian census, OmergaTahsil had a population of 241,339, with 123,852 (51.3%) males and 117,487 (48.7%) females, for a gender ratio of 949 females per thousand males. The tahsil was 80.4% rural in 2001.

In the 2011 census, Omerga Tahsil had 269,849 inhabitants and a gender ratio of 946 females per thousand males.The tahsil was 74.5% rural. The literacy rate in 2011 was 75.28% overall in OmergaTahsil, with a rate of 84.73% for males and 65.35% for females. In 2011 in OmergaTahsil, 11.7% of the population was 0 to 6 years of age.

Marathi is the most commonly used language in Omerga, with around 68% speaking Marathi as their primary language. Urdu and Kannada are also spoken by some.

The Killari earthquake of 1993 affected most parts of the OmergaTahsil. Approximately 2,500–3,000 lives were lost.

Keeping the above facts in the view, a survey was conducted on rural farmerknowledgerequires and which sourced widely used by the farmer for satisfying oftheir knowledgerequires.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The major objectives of the study are:

- To determine the knowledgerequires of the rural farmers.
- To determine the character and types of knowledgerequired by the farmers.
- To determine the origin of knowledgeconsumed by the farmers.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The knowledge requirement of the rural areas has been examined by different types ofstudies. Beside, sex wise (male or female) knowledgerequires of farmerscommunity was also carried by different investigator. These studies appear that therequirement of the farmers is variousal lot to the state of developments of theconcerned rural areas. Knowledgerequirement are as wellchange from village to village, fore.g. farmers of the wheat manufacture area are required the knowledge aboutmarket rate, transport amenity etc. Some studies are found. Saravan R. et al (2008)carried the study on knowledge pattern and knowledgerequirement of the tribal farmersin Arunachal Pradesh specify that most of the farmers requirementknowledge on severaltopics such as pest management, disease management. Tologbonse D, et al. (2008)convey the study of knowledgerequirement of rice farmers community in Niger statedisclosed that majority of farmers (89.9%) requirementknowledge about the cropproduction. Meitei & Devi (2009) operate the study of farmer's community inManipur (India) to find the knowledgerequirement of the rural farmer's community inManipur state. This study exhibit that majority of farmers did not access toknowledge for their activities. Besides they stress that ICT based agriculturalknowledge support systems should be improve. Byamugisha et al. (2009)conducted study on knowledge seeking and use of urban farmers in Uganda foundthat the knowledgerequires of the urban farmers in study area seemed to be asassorted as the farming activities and also emergedto vary from one urban farmer toanother. Achugbue&Anie in 2011 carried the study in Delta State, Nigeria onRural Female farmer's knowledgerequirement and importance of ICT in deliveringknowledgerequires of female farmers. Babu et al. (2011) carried the study onfarmers' knowledgerequires and search behaviors in Tamil Nadu found that themajor constraints to knowledge access for the farmers is poor availability, poorreliability, lack of awareness of knowledge sources available among farmers anduntimely provision of knowledge. Akanda&RoknuzzamanMd (2012) surveyedagricultural information literacy of 160 farmers in the northern region ofBangladesh. The survey shows that farmersrequirementknowledge for various purposesof agricultural activities, and they use different sources and media for access tosuch knowledge.

5. METHODOLOGY:

The survey method was apply to complete the study and questionnaire was applied as adata collection tool for the fulfilling the objectives of the study. The stratifiedcasual sampling technique was applied for the spot selection of farmers. The datacollected around questionnaire, observation and informal interviews wasthoroughly arranged and tabulated using simple statistical method, tables andpercentage. The table and graphs were generated using MS-Excel-2007. Thequestionnaire was arranged in Marathi language for respondents could simply understand the items mentioned in questionnaire. Absolute 180 questionnaires werespread randomly to the farmers. The investigators composed only 175questionnaires from the respondents. This constitutes 97 % of the i.e. 175/180 ofthe total response. It is important to note that some of the respondents could neitherread nor write even in Marathi language which is chief language of the state.

6. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS:

The scope of the present study is limited to the farmers of Omergatahsil and whosemain occupation is agricultural. The study was involving only male farmer'scommunity and therefore it is not projectable of the entire population of the regionFurther the knowledge collected was based on a small numbers (n=175) offarmers. Therefore the result cannot apply to the whole population of the tahasil and allfarmers of the Maharashtra State.

7. DATA ANALYSIS:

Sr. No.	Item	Response	Percentage
1	**Language Know**		
	Marathi	175	100.00
	Hindi	53	30.29
	English	23	13.15
2	**Age in Years**		
	20-30	18	10.29
	31-40	59	33.72
	41-50	63	36.00
	50 & above	35	20.00
3	**Education Status**		
	Illiterate	33	18.81
	Secondary Education	103	58.86
	Graduation & P.G.	18	10.28
	Other	22	12.57

Table 1: Data Analysis

Table 1 display that the all respondents understand Marathi language because it isnative language while 30.29% understand Hindi Language whereas 23respondents know English Language. The highest percentage (36.00)applying the age group 41-50 years attended by the age groups of 31-40 (33.72%). Below educational status, maximum numbers of peoples i.e. (58.86%) areattained up to the higher secondary school, 12.57% are pass out diplomas,polytechnic, whilst 10.28 % are graduate and only 18.81% person are baseilliterate in the study.

8. USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY FARMERS:

Sr.No.	Age	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	138	78.84
2	No	37	21.14

Table 2: Use of Mobile Phones by Farmers

The result presents that the greater number of the farmers (78.84%) are using mobile phonefor communication and other purpose. It is sufficient sign that almost of the farmers ofthe rural area are now use or familiar with the mobile device.

9. KNOWLEDGEREQUIRES BY FARMER:

Sr. No.	Types of Response	No. of Response	Percentage
1	Daily	71	40.58
2	Sometimes	83	47.43
3	Never	22	0.12

Table 3: KnowledgeRequires by Farmer

As for the distribution of respondents with respect of knowledgerequirement isconcerned, majority (40.58%) of the farmers require daily knowledge, while(47.43%) farmers requireknowledge sometimes. Only 0.12 % farmers are stated thatthey do not requirementknowledge for agriculture activities.The above results are more or less similar to those of Metitei and Devi (2009), whoconcluded from a study in Manipur state, India that most of the farmers seek dailyknowledge (46.17%) followed by sometimes (38.18%)

10. AREAS OF KNOWLEDGEREQUIRES OF THE FARMERS:

Sr. No.	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	New crop production	124	70.86
2	Seeds availability	130	74.29
3	Insecticide availability	109	62.29
4	Water Management	60	34.28
5	Fertilizer availability	113	64.58
6	Weather Knowledge	41	23.43
7	New Agriculture equipment's	31	17.72

Table 4: Areas of KnowledgeRequires of the Farmers

(Percentage is more than 100 because multiple choice questions.)The analyst asked to the respondent the areas of knowledge which require forday to day action. As apparent from above table, majority of the farmers requireknowledge on availability of seeds (74.29%) crop production (70.86%) andinsecticide availability (62.29%) followed by fertilizer availability (64.58%).Others areas that were specified by farmers comprise water management (34.28%),weather knowledge (23.43%) and agricultural tools (17.72%)The results to some expanse agrees with the finding of Metitei and Devi (2009) andAchugube&Anie (2011) that male and female farmers required knowledge oncrop production, seeds & fertilizers availability.

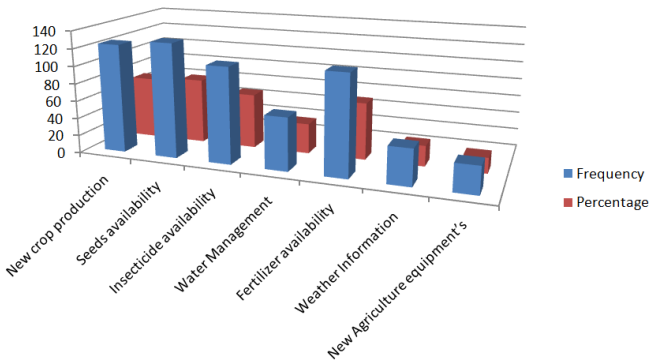

Figure 1: Areas of Knowledge Requirement of the Farmers

11. KNOWLEDGE REQUIRES OF THE FARMERS REGARDING THE FARMING ACTIVITIES:

Sr. No.	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Market knowledge of Agricultural production	136	77.72
2	Bank Credit Knowledge	83	47.43
3	Transport Facilities	94	53.72
4	Government Scheme	115	65.72
5	Government Scheme	32	18.28
6	Crop Insurance	63	36.00

7	Irrigation	34	19.43
8	Medicinal Plants	15	8.58
9	Milk Production	51	29.15

Table 5: Knowledge Requires of the Farmers regarding the farming activities

(Percentage is more than 100 because multiple choice questions)Table 5 reveals that 77.72% farmers require market knowledge ofagriculture production and 65.72 % farmers requirement knowledge about GovernmentScheme such as subsidies, import & export policy of agriculture production.Further, 47.83 % farmers'requirementknowledge about Bank credit facilities. Othersareas that were mentioned by farmers include transport facilities (53.72%), watermanagement (34.28%), weather knowledge (23.43%) and agricultural equipments(17.72%)

12. SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE USED BY FARMERS:

Sr. No.	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Newspaper	109	62.29
2	Magazines	31	17.72
3	T.V.	73	41.72
4	Radio	17	9.71
5	Public Library	7	4.00
6	Other farmers or colleague farmers	117	66.86
7	Agricultural Exhibition	42	24.00
8	Government Office	100	57.15

Table 6: Source of Knowledge used by Farmers

Percentage is more than 100 because multiple choice questions.Table 6 shows that majority of the farmer's rely on their colleague for obtainingthe knowledge when second important channel of knowledge is the newspaper62.29% followed by Government office 57.15% for accessing the knowledge tothe daily farming activity.There are similarity between the results of previous studies, similar as those by Metiteiand Devi (2009), Babuet. al (2011) and Akanda&Roknizzamanu (2012) thisinvestigation shows the main source for acquiring knowledge of the farmers iscolleague farmer & newspapers.

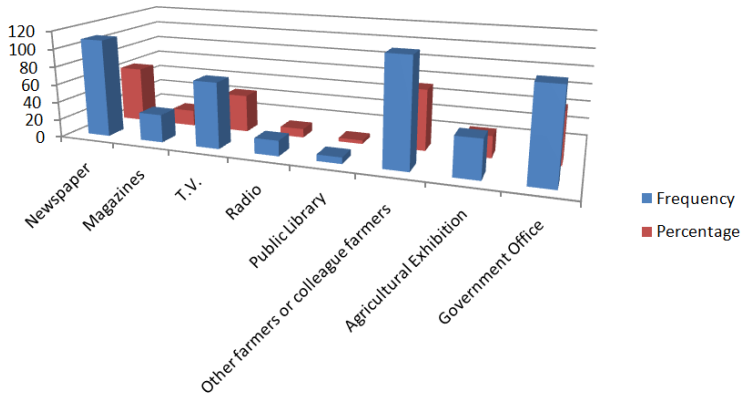

Figure 2: Source of Knowledge used by Farmers

13. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

The analys testablishes that most of the farmers of the rural areas in the stateare requirement knowledge relating to their agriculture activity. Newspapers, fellowfarmers and government offices

were the major sources of knowledge to farmersin ordinary and a few farmers also attempt knowledge against others sources liketelevision, magazines, agricultural exhibition etc. It was establish that 80% farmersbear mobiles phone and most the farmers reported that they were used mobilephones for some agricultural activity. Government's offices and market departmentshave begun to send dailyknowledge through the SMS to the farmers regardingthe price of commodity, weathers forecasts, fertilizers, general news item etc. Itwas appear mobiles phones have started making collision on the agricultural activityin rural areas. The finding further exposed that majority (41.72%) of the farmersused television for hearing agricultural news because it is widely accessible torural areas. Newspapers are express the most important communicationchannels in rural areas as it has easily available and publish in locallanguage. Many newspapers published in Marathi language have been publishedweekly supplement on farm mechanization, crop security and disease, horticulture,animal husbandry, food processing, professional'ssuggestions and new innovations in agricultureetc. Agrowon a daily newspaper printed in Marathi languages produce thesignificantknowledge on the agricultural activity. Numerous farmers subscribedthis newspaper for acquirementknowledge.Since the area is drought prone area and average rainfall occurs only 45 to 52 cmsyearly but analystestablish that the there is less awareness about watermanagement techniques between the farmers. Simply 34.28% farmersrequirement theknowledge around water management techniques. Government of India has heldmany enterprises for adoption and absorption of knowledge technologies foragriculture knowledge communication. Both the central and state government arenow working towards the development of ICT infrastructure in all the rural areas in Maharashtra so as to help the rural farmers' access agricultural knowledge foroptimal farm production. However it is found that local offices of the governmentsin rural area are not well equipped with up to date of knowledge andcommunication gadgets, such as computers & communication resources, internetresources, local area and wide area networks, telephones lines in rural areas. Mostof the farmers are not familiar with the ICT based tools such as computer, internet application.

This study has provided a first look at the potential of knowledge in affecting theagricultural sector as a whole. The study has reported there is growing awarenessimportance of knowledge and its use among the farming community. Farmersmust be able to get knowledge delivered to them at a time and place of theirchoosing and it will be beneficial to farmer's to realize productivity gains from thechoice of new farming practices and actions to mitigate crop losses. K Saradahas rightly emphasis back in 1999 that there is requirement of the hour to set up theCommunity Knowledge Centers (CIS) as nodal point for all knowledge servicesfor the benefit of society.

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