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TO INVESTIGATE THE SCENARIOS IN WHICH FARMERS SEEK INFORMATION RESOURCES

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ABSTRACT

The development of rural farmers, especially in the Vidarbha region, is strongly influenced by their access to appropriate agricultural information. With the right information, farmers can enhance their practices, improve their economic outcomes, and contribute to both local and national agricultural growth. Therefore, ensuring that rural farmers have access to accurate, timely, and relevant agricultural information is essential for their progress, and this research aims to further explore and address these information needs to foster their development and success.

KEYWORDS : *agricultural information , national agricultural growth , development and success.*

INTRODUCTON

The agricultural labor force, particularly in rural areas, faces significant challenges due to the impact of modern agricultural technologies, marketing practices, and various government development programs, which often contribute to persistent poverty. These challenges are exacerbated by inadequate infrastructure, insufficient financial incentives for adopting new technologies, and poor communication and transportation networks. Additionally, there is a shortage of technically skilled workers, creating a substantial technological divide for rural farmers. This gap in technology adoption has made farming increasingly less profitable, as farmers struggle to access the necessary information and resources to optimize their agricultural practices.

As Spink and Currier (2006) point out, the increasing importance of evolutionary approaches in agriculture marks a significant shift in the field of agricultural information behavior (HIB). With the rapid development of modern technology, there has been a marked increase in the demand for agricultural information. Consequently, farmers are increasingly recognizing the need to gather more knowledge to advance agricultural practices and improve their productivity. As a result, farmers' attitudes toward both print and electronic sources of agricultural information are evolving. This highlights the importance of researching to understand farmers' specific needs for agricultural knowledge, particularly in the context of the rapidly changing agricultural landscape.

The objective of this study is to determine the specific agricultural information requirements of farmers in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. The study will primarily focus on evaluating the demands for agricultural resources and the information required to meet these needs. Understanding these requirements is crucial for designing interventions that can effectively support farmers in improving their productivity and livelihoods.

Majid and Kassim (2000) define information-seeking behavior as the various actions individuals engage in to express their information needs, obtain the necessary information, evaluate it, and utilize it to fulfill those needs. Information is essential for performing everyday tasks, and this is particularly true for farmers who depend on it for their economic well-being. Farmers require a wide range of information to make informed decisions, such as details about soil types, contract farming options, new crop varieties, weather forecasts, pest control, input availability (e.g., fertilizers, seeds), market conditions, value addition through packaging and processing, soil fertility, financial incentives like subsidies, seed quality, out-grower schemes, warehousing facilities, and disease outbreaks.

Farmers access this information from a variety of sources, including television, mobile phones, village leaders (Sarpanch), social gatherings (such as temples or chopal), radio, signboards, posters, leaflets, newsletters, newspapers, online platforms like Google search engines, YouTube channels dedicated to farming, public address systems, interpersonal communication with other farmers, agro-dealers, extension officers, agricultural exhibitions, libraries, and information centers like Kri. These channels serve as vital sources of agricultural knowledge, which rural farmers rely on to meet their personal and professional needs.

The dependence on information is crucial for rural farmers as it helps them achieve their agricultural goals, such as improving crop yields, enhancing livestock management, and securing better market prices. Access to accurate and timely agricultural information plays a key role in ensuring a healthier and more prosperous lifestyle for farmers. Given that their livelihoods depend on factors like crop production, cattle care, and overall farm management, access to relevant information is a key driver of their economic development.

Table 1: Information regarding requirement of farmers for agricultural information

Information Requirements	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Development of new crops	512	93.1	38	6.9	550
Availability of seeds	327	59.5	223	40.5	550
Availability of insecticides	412	74.9	138	25.1	550
Water Resources Management	531	96.5	19	3.5	550
Availability of fertilizer	429	78.0	121	22.0	550
Information about the weather	542	98.5	8	1.5	550
New Tools for Agriculture	537	97.6	13	2.4	550
Testing of the soil	411	74.7	139	25.3	550

%- Percent

Above Table 1 demonstrates information regarding requirement of farmers for agricultural information. It is apparent from the information that 98.5% farmers are required information about the weather conditions whereas 97.6% farmers are required information about new tools for agriculture. Furthermore, percentage of farmers requiring information about water resource management, development of new crops, availability of fertilizer, availability of insecticides, testing of the soil and availability of seeds is 96.5%, 93.1%, 78.0%, 74.9%, 74.7% and 59.5% respectively. Hence, it is observed that farmers are required multiple information out of which most of the farmers are required information about the weather conditions followed by new tools, water resource management,

development of new crops, availability of fertilizer, availability of insecticides, testing of the soil and availability of seeds etc.

Table 2: Information regarding favourite media used by farmers to get information

Type of Media	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Periodicals/Magazines	292	53.1	258	46.9	**550**
Chavdi	132	24.0	418	76.0	**550**
On TV	417	75.8	133	24.2	**550**
Radio	312	56.7	238	43.3	**550**
Smartphone	492	89.5	58	10.5	**550**
YouTube	316	57.5	234	42.5	**550**
Facebook	113	20.5	437	79.5	**550**
WhatsApp	311	56.5	239	43.5	**550**
An Additional Source	211	38.4	339	61.6	**550**

%- Percent

Above Table 2 shows information regarding favourite media used by farmers to get information. It is apparent from the information that 89.5% farmers used smartphone to get information whereas 75.8% farmers watch tv to get information. Furthermore, percentage of farmers using YouTube, radio, WhatsApp, periodicals/magazines, an additional source, chavdi and Facebook to get information is 57.5%, 56.7%, 56.5%, 53.1%, 38.4%, 24.0% and 20.5% respectively. Hence, it is observed that farmers are used multiple media to get information out of which most of the farmers are used smartphone to get information followed by tv, YouTube, radio, WhatsApp, periodicals/magazines, an additional source, chavdi and Facebook etc.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the result of Table 1 that most of the farmers required multiple information out of which most of the farmers required information about the weather conditions followed by new tools, water resource management, development of new crops, availability of fertilizer, availability of insecticides, testing of the soil and availability of seeds etc.

It is evident from the result of Table 2 that most of the farmers are used multiple media to get information out of which most of the farmers are used smartphone to get information followed by tv, YouTube, radio, WhatsApp, periodicals/magazines, an additional source, chavdi and Facebook etc

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