



Farm Women Preferences of Information Sources for Vegetable Cultivation in Nainital District of Uttarakhand

KEYWORDS

Communication sources, Usability, Utilization, Farm women, Vegetable cultivation

*DEEPIKA VERMA

Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Communication, G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar. *Corresponding author

GYANENDRA SHARMA

Professor, Department of Agricultural Communication, G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar

ABSTRACT The contribution of women to vegetable production over the years has been acknowledged and there is a need to make available to them appropriate information to enhance their vegetable production. A research namely 'Farm women preferences of information sources for vegetable cultivation in Nainital district of Uttarakhand' was undertaken to find out usability and utilization of various information sources by the women vegetable growers. The study was conducted in six villages of Community Development Blocks, Haldwani, Ramnagar and Dhari in Nainital district of Uttarakhand. Data were collected through pre-tested semi-structured interview schedule and Focus Group Discussion from 150 women vegetable growers. The findings of the study focused on useful guidelines for designing effective communication strategy based on the communication preferences of women vegetable growers by analysing utility and usability of communication sources.

INTRODUCTION

Women have an important role to play in the dynamic process of social change. They have to be brought up from their present state of subjugation and exploitation. This requires sensitivity and understanding of women's preferred style of communication, interaction and leadership. Women form a large segment of the agricultural workforce. They deserve increased attention of agricultural extension services in every developing nation. There is a need for an action-oriented plan to reach millions of women in agriculture who fill the bread baskets of the third world and contribute to their exports. Despite their immense contribution to the household economy and their critical role in determining and guaranteeing food security as food producers, food providers and contributors to household nutrition and security, rural women often face difficulties than men in gaining access to agricultural information to increase their production and productivity. Extension system must target particular categories of clients to meet their needs efficiently. The range of women's tasks and activities in agricultural production is much wider than that of men. The extension service, being predominantly run by and composed of men, needs improvement to understand women's production system and to view farm business and household economies from the women's stand point. Various communication sources and channels play an important role in providing information support to the farm women for every cultivation operations. Adoption of improved package of practices by the farmers varies from farmer to farmer depending upon their situation and availability of information sources to them. Women tend to use different communication sources for obtain the technology. Keeping this in view, the present investigation was carried to study the sources of information used by farm women about the recommended package of practices of vegetable cultivation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in Haldwani, Ramnagar and Dhari Blocks of Nainital Districts of Uttarakhand state. Two villages from each Block were selected randomly through simple random sampling without replacement. Descriptive

research design was used for conducting the research. In all 150 women vegetable growers, who are growing vegetables for commercial purposes were selected using census method from six villages. Semi-structured interview schedule, Focus Group Discussion and observation were used for collecting the information. The extent of usefulness and utilization of information sources by the farm women were studied for vegetables. The frequency of using information sources by the respondents had been analysed to see how frequently they used the information sources. The frequency of contact with different sources by the farm women was measured with the help of three point interval scale. Usefulness refers to the benefits derived from technological information source usage. The usefulness of using information sources by the respondents had been analysed. Information sources were categorised as personal localite, personal cosmopolite and mass media sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Usefulness of communication sources by the respondents for vegetable cultivation

The data about usefulness of personal localite, personal cosmopolite and mass media sources as perceived by farm women had been reported in following heads:

Usefulness of personal localite information sources by the respondents

It is clear from the Table 1 that very useful localite information source perceived by the respondents which ranked first were family members and neighbour with a score of 3.00 followed by traditional folk media and village leaders (II, WMS 2.97), panchayat member (III, WMS, 2.89), friends (IV, WMS 2.81), progressive farmers (V, WMS) and relatives (VI, WMS 2.87).

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of usability of personal localite information source by respondents for vegetable cultivation (n=150)

S.N	Personal localite source	Extent of usefulness						WMS	Rank
		Very useful		Somewhat useful		Not useful			
		No	Percent-age	No	per-cent-age	No	percent-age		
1.	Family members	150	100.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
2.	Neighbour	150	100.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
3.	Progressive farmer	130	86.67	20	13.33	0	0.00	2.87	V
4.	Relatives	45	30.00	100	66.67	5	3.33	2.27	VI
5.	Friends	132	88.00	18	12.00	-	-	2.88	IV
6.	Village leaders	145	96.67	5	3.33	-	-	2.97	II
7.	Panchayat members	134	89.33	15	10.00	1	0.67	2.89	III
8.	Traditional folk media	145	96.67	5	3.33	0	0.00	2.97	II

Usability of personal cosmopolite information sources by respondents for vegetable cultivation**Table 2: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of usability of personal cosmopolite information source by respondents for vegetable cultivation (n=150)**

Sl. No.	Personal cosmopolite source	Extent of usefulness						WMS	Rank
		Very useful		Somewhat useful		Not useful			
		No	Percentage	No	Percentage	No	Percentage		
1.	University scientists	60	40.00	70	46.67	20	13.33	2.27	IX
2.	FDO	130	86.67	20	13.33	-	-	2.87	IV
3.	VEO	80	53.33	50	33.33	20	13.33	2.40	X
4.	ADO	8	5.33	8	5.33	134	89.33	1.16	XIV
5.	District extension specialists	10	6.67	20	13.33	120	80.00	1.27	XIII
6.	Co-operative societies personnel	111	74.00	20	13.33	19	12.67	2.61	VIII
7.	KVK scientists	120	80.00	30	20.00	-	-	2.80	V
8.	Social workers	60	40.00	55	36.67	35	23.33	2.17	XI
9.	Farmers' training Centres	108	72.00	42	28.00	-	-	2.72	VII
10.	Kisan mela	145	96.67	5	3.33	-	-	2.97	II
11.	Exhibition	55	36.67	55	36.67	40	26.67	2.10	XII
12.	Banks	150	100.00	0	0.00	-	-	3.00	I
13.	Meetings	120	80.00	30	20.00	-	-	2.80	V
14.	Kisan govt. shiksha	150	100.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
15.	Krishak mahotsav	140	93.33	10	6.67	-	-	2.93	III
16.	Contact farmers	120	80.00	25	16.67	5	3.33	2.77	VI
17.	Mandi samiti	150	100.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
18.	Pesticides/ seed/ fertilizers depot holders	150	100.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
19.	Input agency	150	100.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
20.	Training programme	115	76.67	35	23.33	-	-	2.77	VI

Data concerning the usefulness of personal cosmopolite source as perceived by farm women as indicated in Table 2 depicts that banks, mandi samiti, pesticides/ seed/ fertilizers depot holders and input agency among listed cosmopolite source were perceived as very useful with a score of 3.00 and ranked first. Among the other cosmopolite sources kisan mela ranked second with a score of 2.97 followed by kisan mahotsav (III, WMS 2.93), Forest Development Officer (FDO) (IV, WMS 2.87), Krishi Vigyan Kendra

(KVK) scientists (V, WMS 2.80), contact farmer and training programme (VI, WMS 2.77), Farmer Training Center (VII, WMS 2.72), co-operative society personnel (VIII, WMS 2.61), university scientists (IX, WMS 2.27), Village Extension Officer (VEO) (X, WMS 2.40), social worker (XI, WMS 2.17), exhibition (XII, WMS 2.10) and District extension specialist at last rank (XIII) with a score of 1.27.

In rural areas, poor still rely on their local communication system. Interpersonal source of communication form the hub of mass media in merely playing the role of creating awareness among the poor. The concrete information regarding their development activities is derived from personal localite or personal cosmopolite sources (Kumar et al., 2010).

Usefulness of mass media information sources by the respondents

It is clear from the Table 3 that among the mass media sources television, newspaper and mobile were perceived as very useful sources of information which ranked first with a score of 3.00. All listed mass media sources except farm magazine/journal all were perceived very useful and somewhat useful by the respondents. Hoardings ranked second with a score of 2.94 followed by pamphlets (III, WMS 2.87), radio (IV, WMS 2.80), kisan call center (V, WMS 2.13), cassette recorder (VI, WMS 2.07), internet (VII, WMS 1.95) and farm magazine and journals at last rank (VIII) with a score of 1.37.

It was also observed that the respondents more frequently utilized localite source of information as compare to cosmopolite sources and mass media sources. Farm women perceived these sources useful but due to unavailability of these sources to their door step, gender biasness and heavy work load they are feel unable to utilize them. Different mass media and cosmopolite source of information were not frequently utilized and their usefulness in area which hindered not only awareness level of farm women, but also adversely affects the adoption level regarding the latest production technology related to vegetable.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of usability of mass media source by the respondents for vegetable cultivation (n=150)

S.N	Mass media source	Extent of usefulness						WMS	Rank
		Very useful		Somewhat useful		Not useful			
		No	Per-centage	No	Per-centage	No	Per-centage		
1.	Television	150	100.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
2.	Radio	120	80.00	30	20.00	-	-	2.80	IV
3.	Newspapers	150	100.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
4.	Farm magazine/ journal	6	4.00	44	29.33	100	66.67	1.37	VIII
5.	Mobile	150	100.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
6.	Internet	1	0.67	145	96.67	-	-	1.95	VII
7.	Pamphlets	130	86.67	20	13.33	-	-	2.87	III
8.	Cassette recorder	10	6.67	140	93.33	-	-	2.07	VI
9.	Kisan call centers	20	13.33	130	86.67	-	-	2.13	V
10.	Hoardings	141	94.00	9	6.00	-	-	2.94	II

2. Frequency of information source utilization

The data utilization of personal localite, personal cosmopolite and mass media sources as perceived by farm women had been reported under following heads:

Utilization of personal localite information sources by the respondents

Table 4: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of frequency of personal localite information source utilization by respondents for vegetable cultivation (n=150)

S.N	Personal localite source	Extent of utilization						WMS	Rank
		Regularly		Often		Never			
		No	Percent-age	No	percent-age	No	percent-age		
1.	Family members	150	100	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
2.	Neighbour	150	100	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
3.	Progressive farmer	90	60.00	60	40.00	-	-	2.60	IV
4.	Relatives	70	46.67	80	53.33	-	-	2.47	V
5.	Friends	135	90.00	13	8.67	2	1.33	2.89	II
6.	Village leaders	150	100	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
7.	Panchayat members	130	86.67	20	13.33	-	-	2.87	III
8.	Traditional folk media	36	24.00	45	30.00	69	46.00	1.78	VI

A cursory look at the Table 4 indicates that among personal localite sources of information all the respondents perceived family members, neighbour and village leaders as most frequent used source of information with weighted mean score (WMS) score of 3.00 and ranked first. Information was received frequently by the respondents from friends with the WMS of 2.89 ranked second, followed by information from panchayat members (WMS 2.87) ranked third, followed by information from progressive farmers (WMS 2.60) ranked fourth and information from relatives (WMS 2.47) ranked fifth. It depicts that family, neighbours and village leaders perceived as more frequently used localite source of information.

Utilization of personal cosmopolite information sources by the respondents

Among the personal cosmopolite source of information, the frequency of information source utilization (Table 5) was highest from the co-operative members and banks which ranked first with a score of 3.00 followed by Kisan Mahotsav (II, WMS 2.87), meetings (III, WMS 2.81), Kisan goshti (IV, WMS 2.80), ADO (V, WMS 1.90), Kisan mela (VI WMS), social worker and training programme (VII, WMS 1.20) and KVK scientists (VIII, WMS 1.12). It is also clear from the Table 5 that farmer training centre and Mandi samiti ranked ninth with a score 1.10 followed by contact farmer (XI, WMS 1.03) and university scientists, VEO, DEO and pesticides/ depot holder (XIII, WMS 1.00).

The utilization pattern in case of mandi samiti, pesticides/ seed/ fertilizers depot holders and input agency is totally different, as these sources not were regularly utilized by them. It is clear from the table that personal cosmopolite sources were not frequently utilized by the farm women as they did not go outside their villages frequently. Most of the time male member of their family contacted these sources and passed information to the farm women. Women were rarely contacted by theses sources.

It was found that extension personnel or experts conducted less frequent and regular field visits in villages to monitor the actual situation. One of the reasons expressed by them was they did not have transportation facilities and

lack of field staff. Farm women also expressed most of the time expert visited to their villages only when outbreak of diseases regularly published by newspaper. After that also there is no follow up in the area.

Table 5: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of frequency of personal cosmopolite information source utilization by respondents for vegetable cultivation (n=150)

S.N	Personal cosmopolite source	Extent of utilization						WMS	Rank
		Regularly		Often		Never			
		No	Percent-age	No	Percent-age	No	Percent-age		
1.	University scientists	-	-	-	-	150	100	1.00	XII
2.	ADO	-	-	135	90.00	15	10.00	1.90	V
3.	VEO	-	-	-	-	150	100.00	1.00	XII
4.	District extension specialists	-	-	-	-	150	100.00	1.00	XII
5.	Co-operative societies personnel	150	100.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
6.	KVK scientists	-	-	18	12.00	132	88.00	1.12	VIII
7.	Social workers	5	3.33	20	13.33	125	83.33	1.20	VII
8.	Farmers' training Centres	-	-	15	10.00	135	90.00	1.10	IX
9.	Kisan mela	20	13.33	40	26.67	90	53.33	1.53	VI
10.	Exhibition	-	-	-	-	150	100.00	1.00	XII
11.	Banks	150	100.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
12.	Meetings	121	80.67	29	19.33	-	-	2.81	III
13.	Kisan goshtthi	120	80.00	30	20.00	-	-	2.80	IV
14.	Krishak mahotsav	130	86.67	20	13.33	-	-	2.87	II
15.	Contact farmers	-	-	5	3.33	145	96.67	1.03	XI
16.	Mandi samiti	5	3.33	5	3.33	140	93.33	1.10	IX
17.	Pesticides/ seed/ fertilizers depot holders	-	-	-	-	150	100.00	1.00	XII
18.	Input agency	5	3.33	-	-	145	96.67	1.07	XII
19.	Training programme	-	-	30	20.00	120	80.00	1.20	VII

Utilization of mass media information sources by the respondents

Table 6: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of frequency of mass media source utilization by respondents for vegetable cultivation (n=150)

S.N	Mass media source	Extent of utilization						WMS	Rank
		Regularly		Often		Never			
		No	Percentage	No	Percentage	No	Percentage		
1.	Television	33	22.00	71	47.33	46	30.67	1.91	IV
2.	Radio	54	36.00	48	32.00	48	32.00	2.04	III
3.	Newspapers	26	17.33	24	16.00	100	66.67	1.51	V
4.	Two magazine/ journal	-	-	3	2.00	147	98.00	1.02	VII
5.	Mobile	150	100.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	I
6.	Internet	-	-	1	0.67	149	99.33	1.01	VIII
7.	Pamphlets	120	80.00	18	12.00	12	8.00	2.72	II
8.	Cassette recorder	-	-	-	-	150	100.00	1.00	IX
9.	Kisan call centres	-	-	-	-	150	100.00	1.00	IX
10.	Recordings	-	-	30	20.00	120	80.00	1.20	VI

Table 6 depicts that among the mass media sources mobile ranked first with a score of 3.00 followed by pamphlets (II, WMS 2.72), radio (III, WMS 2.04), television (IV, WMS 1.91), newspaper (V, WMS 1.51), hoardings (VI, WMS 1.20) and farm magazine (VII, WMS 1.02). Table 6 also revealed that only one respondent use internet often (VIII rank) with a score 1.01 and cassette recorder and kisan call center ranked ninth with a score of 1.00 as their frequency of utilization was nil.

It can be concluded that as compared to localite sources of information mass media sources were least utilized by the farm women. This might be due to non availability of cosmopolite sources to farm women at their door step. Similar findings were reported by Vijayraghvan et al. (1997) and Devi and Verma (2011).

Based on the above findings following recommendations have been framed:

- Farmer Training Centers (FTCs) are best and suitable institutional mechanisms to reach farm women. Therefore, FTCs should have special, women oriented programs. A policy guideline may be framed at national or regional levels to evolve special formal or informal trainings focusing on women in all sectors where they play major roles. These sectors may include dairying, poultry, horticulture, post-harvest technology, health and sanitation, balanced nutrition, family planning and other issues also.
- Distance education in vegetable cultivation should be promoted in the community, so that every farm women who is supporting her family through this venture can make it more profitable through appropriate knowledge.
- It was observed that cosmopolite sources were least frequently utilized but found as useful source of information therefore as a part of strategy, it is important to create focused awareness among these sources (especially ground level officials), who are in constant contact with the local community and could help in spreading the latest information according to the local needs and giving the proper feedback.
- They found discussions and demonstrations more interesting on TV and discussions in radio programmes. Many respondents wished to have information through radio and CD.
- They preferred radio and mobile phones for getting marketing information on daily basis but many of them were not aware about the complex functions of mobile phone as well as the service providers. So it can be concluded that majority of the respondents needed and prioritized the information on pest and disease identification and control, fertilizer application methods and marketing. They wished to have information through folk media, television, radio and VCDs. They preferred evening time for interactions in their community.
- Based on the outcome of the study it was observed that farm women are also using mass media sources up to some extent. Therefore emphasis should be given on using these media more for creating awareness regarding new schemes and appropriate technology for vegetable cultivation in understandable language, so that community could also relate themselves with interest.

CONCLUSION

Findings of this study indicated that participation of women farmers in various areas of extension programmes was very low in the study area. Agricultural extension services should no longer continue considering women as housewives and mothers only, focusing mainly on male farmers. Improving participation of women farmers in various areas of extension programmes by strengthening role and reach of the communication sources is the best option for empowering farm women for better networking of agricultural information. Therefore, it is recommended that, training programmes should be organized and conducted based on women's need, in a manner that women are encouraged to attend, taking into consideration timing, duration, location and language; in any training organized for farmers. Rural women are confined to their localities, so they cannot go far from their localities.

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