

Information Sharing Behaviour of ATMA Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries about Paddy Cultivation Technologies in Puducherry and Karaikal Region of Puducherry

J. Sivasubramanian^{*1} and M. Kavaskar²

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Public extension system will continue to play central role in technology dissemination in India. The approaches to extension have undergone many changes since independence. During the pre-green revolution era (1950-65), Community Development programme through National Extension Service (1953) was introduced with emphasis on human and community development, and technology transfer. The system continued even during the green revolution era of 1965-1970, with emphasis on high yielding varieties programme. But in early 1970 the training and Visit system was adopted for technology dissemination. This programme continued in the post green revolution era (1980-95) [1]. The T&V programme adopted a top-down approach for technology transfer, where extension agents visited a particular village once in a fortnight to pass on the information to a group or contact farmers, who in turn were supposed to disseminate it among other farmers. The top-down approach was successful as long as the technologies were simple and input based like high yielding varieties, chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

The challenges posed by agricultural globalization revolution in information and communication technology rising population and the consequent demand for sustainability have prompted to have a re-look on the existing extension system in India and re-orient it with proper direction. In November 1998, Govt. of India initiated a project called National Agriculture Technology Project (NATP) with the financial assistance from World Bank. The concept of ATMA was introduced in 1999 as an autonomous organization under the National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) by providing flexible working environment. The concept of ATMA envisages paradigm shift from “top down” to “bottom up” in planning and implementation of agriculture development programmes. ATMA is a decentralized and demand driven extension mechanism operating on the comparative strength of different stakeholders.

Communication and information play vital role in public and private extension system. “Information has a vital role to play in improving and sustaining agricultural

production of any country. Timely availability of relevant information is vital for effective performance of farmers and increase productivity [2], Communication from different sources and channels are the essence of extension, which provides knowledge and information for rural people to modify their behaviour in the ways that provide sustainable benefits to them and to the society [3].

This study was carried out in Puducherry and Karaikal region of Puducherry Union Territory. The sample size of one hundred and twenty ATMA beneficiaries and 120 non-beneficiaries were selected based on the random sampling method. An interview schedule was used to collect the data on information sharing behaviour of respondents. Information sharing behaviour refers to the tendency of the respondents to share the information on paddy cultivation technologies received by them. One score was assigned for each of the information shared with others. The collected data were analyzed by using simple percentage analysis and mean score were used for overall information sharing behavior and source wise sharing behavior of respondents.

Information sharing behaviour

Information sharing behaviour refers to dissemination of information to others. To know the extent of information sharing behaviour among the respondents, data have been collected and presented in (Table 1).

Table 1 Distribution of respondents according to their overall information sharing behaviour

Category	ATMA Farmers		Non-ATMA Farmers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Low	23	19.16	46	38.33
Medium	62	51.66	54	45.00
High	35	29.17	20	16.67
Total	120	100.00	120	100.00

From the (Table 1), it could be noted that more than half (51.66 per cent) of the ATMA beneficiaries had medium level of information sharing behaviour followed by high (29.17 per cent) and low (19.16 per cent) level of information sharing behaviour. In case of non-beneficiary category 45.00 per cent of the respondents had medium level of information

*J. Sivasubramanian
sivasubramanianj1@gmail.com

^{1,2}Department of Agricultural Extension, Faculty of Agriculture, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar - 608 002, Tamil Nadu

sharing behaviour followed by low (38.33 per cent) and high (16.67 per cent) level of information sharing behaviour. It could be concluded that ATMA beneficiaries had medium to high level information sharing behaviour, whereas non-beneficiary had medium to low level of information sharing behaviour. This may be due to high level of information seeking behaviour of ATMA beneficiaries may be the probable reason for high level of information sharing behaviour [4]. Information sharing behaviour of the

respondents, about 1/3rd of the respondents had medium (33.75%) and high (32.5%) information sharing behaviour while 3.75 per cent had low information sharing behaviour regarding vegetable cultivation.

Source wise information sharing behaviour

The different sources to which the respondents were share the information on paddy cultivation technologies have been collected and furnished in (Table 2).

Table 2 Distribution of respondents according to their source wise information sharing behaviour

Sources/ Channel	ATMA Farmers		Non-ATMA Farmers	
	Mean score	Rank	Mean score	Rank
Friends	0.86	II	0.55	III
Family members	0.92	I	0.86	I
Relatives	0.67	VI	0.49	V
Neighbors	0.76	III	0.58	II
Progressive farmers	0.61	VII	0.43	VI
Farmers of agricultural meetings / demonstrations	0.73	IV	0.20	IX
Farmers in his street	0.69	V	0.52	IV
To those come and seek	0.48	VIII	0.40	VII
By writing article about his experience	0.02	X	0.00	X
Those who participate in his ceremonies	0.38	IX	0.32	VIII

From the above (Table 2), it could be noted that information sharing behavior of ATMA beneficiaries was found in descending order viz., family members were the first category of persons (0.92) disseminated the information regarding paddy cultivation technologies. Friends and neighbors were found to be the second and third category of persons (0.86 and 0.76 per cent) disseminated the information. Farmers of agricultural meetings / demonstrations (0.73) was ranked forth followed by farmers in his street (0.69), relatives (0.67) and progressive farmers (0.61) was ranked fifth, sixth and seventh rank respectively. To those come and seek (0.48) was ranked eighth followed by those who participate in his ceremonies (0.38) and by writing article about his experience (0.02) were ranked ninth and tenth respectively. The reason of this may be due to natural habit of any farmers to dissemination of information to their family members, friends and relatives first than to others. Further, high level of mass media exposure and information seeking behaviour may be the reason for high level of information sharing behaviour exist among the ATMA beneficiaries.

Whereas, information sharing behaviour of non-beneficiaries was found in descending order viz., to family members (0.86) was ranked at first to disseminated the information regarding paddy cultivation technologies followed by neighbors (0.58) at second, friends (0.55) at third, farmers in his street (0.52), relatives (0.49), progressive farmers (0.43) were found to be fourth, fifth and sixth rank respectively. To

those come and seek (0.40) were found to be seventh rank followed by those who participate in his ceremonies (0.32) at eight rank and farmers of agricultural meetings / demonstrations (0.20) were found to be ninth rank. None of the respondents shared the information by writing article about his experience. This might be due to fact that medium level of mass media exposure and information seeking behaviour may be the reason for medium to low level of information sharing behaviour exist among the non-beneficiaries [5].

SUMMARY

This study was conducted in Puducherry and Karaikal region of Puducherry Union Territory. A sample size of 240 ATMA beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries were selected based on random sampling method. Data were collected by interviewing the respondents personally with the help of a pre-tested and structured interview schedule. Percentage analysis was used for analyzing and interpreting the data. The data revealed that more than half (51.66 per cent) of the ATMA beneficiaries had medium level of information sharing behaviour followed by high (29.17 per cent). In case of non-beneficiary category 45.00 per cent of the respondents had medium level of information sharing behaviour followed by low (38.33 per cent) and high (16.67 per cent) level of information sharing behaviour.

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