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Utilisation behaviour of information sources by paddy farmers of rice exporting regions of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh states

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Abstract

Access to accurate and timely agricultural information is crucial for improving farm productivity, decision-making, and sustainability. This study examines the utilization behaviour of information sources among paddy farmers in rice exporting regions of Nalgonda and Nizamabad districts of Telangana and East Godavari and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh. A total of 160 farmers were surveyed using an ex post facto research design. Findings reveal that farmers predominantly rely on personal sources such as family, friends (65% in Telangana, 68.75% in Andhra Pradesh), and neighbours (47.5% in Telangana, 51.25% in Andhra Pradesh) for agricultural knowledge. Among Impersonal localite sources, State Agriculture department officials emerged as the most utilized (71.25% in Telangana, 73.75% in Andhra Pradesh), while mass media sources such as mobile/internet services (23.75% in Telangana, 33.75% in Andhra Pradesh) and newspapers (27.5% in Telangana, 33.75% in Andhra Pradesh) showed moderate engagement. The study underscores the need for integrating digital tools, strengthening farmer-researcher linkages, and expanding practical learning opportunities through Kisan Melas and on-field demonstrations to enhance information dissemination. A hybrid approach combining traditional, institutional, and digital information channels is recommended for improving agricultural extension services and supporting sustainable paddy farming in the region.

Keywords: Paddy farmers, exports, information sources

Introduction

Agricultural information plays a crucial role in enhancing farm productivity, improving decision-making, and ensuring sustainable farming practices. In the context of paddy cultivation, farmers rely on diverse sources of information to gain knowledge about weather patterns, pest control, fertilizer application, irrigation techniques, and market trends (Aker, 2011) [1]. The availability and accessibility of information significantly influence farmers' adoption of new technologies and best practices, ultimately affecting their yield and income levels (Mittal & Mehar, 2016) [3].

The sources of agricultural information for paddy farmers range from traditional methods, such as fellow farmers, extension officers, and agricultural input dealers, to modern digital platforms, including mobile applications, social media, and online advisory services (Sulaiman & Van den Ban, 2000) [6]. While traditional sources remain relevant due to personal trust and ease of access, technological advancements have led to increased reliance on digital and mass media sources (Meera *et. al*, 2004) [2]. However, the effectiveness of these sources depends on various factors, including literacy levels, technological accessibility, socio-economic conditions, and institutional support (Reddy, 2019) [4]. Farmers rely on multiple sources for acquiring agricultural information, ranging from traditional interpersonal networks to modern digital tools. Traditional sources include fellow farmers, local input dealers, progressive farmers, agricultural extension officers, and mass media such as radio and television (Sulaiman & Holt, 2002) [5].

Understanding the utilization behaviour of paddy farmers in accessing and applying agricultural information is essential for designing effective extension strategies and information dissemination models. This study aims to analyse the information utilization behaviour among paddy farmers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh states in the rice export regions. The findings will contribute to policy recommendations for improving agricultural extension services, the study will also contribute to the formulation of policies aimed at bridging the digital divide and strengthening agricultural extension networks to support sustainable paddy farming practices suitable for export standards.

Objective of the study

To study the utilisation behaviour of information sources by

paddy farmers of export regions of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh states.

Methodology

Research design: Ex post - facto research design was adopted for the investigation.

Locale of the study: This study was conducted in the Nizamabad and Nalgonda districts of Telangana and East Godavari and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh in rice export regions, which are among the top paddy producing districts of their respective states, two states were selected to study the difference among utilisation behaviour of information sources by the paddy farmers of both states.

Sampling procedure

40 farmers from each district were selected purposively, with good experience in paddy farming, therefore 80 farmers from Telangana and 80 farmers from Andhra Pradesh states were selected making a total of 160 farmers from both the states.

Data collection method: The Data collection was done with the use of a well-structured interview schedule and Questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

From table.1 it can be interpreted that in the personal localite category, family and friends are the most frequently used source of information by farmers (65% in Telangana, 68.75% in Andhra Pradesh) followed by Neighbours (47.5% in Telangana, 51.25% in Andhra Pradesh), and Local Leaders (28.75% in Telangana, 31.25% in Andhra Pradesh). The high utilization of family and friends suggests that information is often passed down generationally, which may limit exposure to GAP-Good Agricultural Practices recommended for exports, Farmers trust firsthand experiences and prefer direct, informal advice from those they know. The strong cooperative farming culture enables knowledge-sharing among neighbours, particularly in Godavari delta regions where farmers jointly manage irrigation canals. The lower reliance on local leaders indicates a decline in their role as primary sources of agricultural guidance.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to their utilisation behaviour of information sources.

S. No.	Information Source	Utilisation behaviour											
		Telangana farmers (n=80)						Andhra Pradesh farmers(n=80)					
		Regularly		Occasionally		Never		Regularly		Occasionally		Never	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I. Personal Localite													
1	Family& Friends	52	65	17	21.25	11	13.75	55	68.75	17	21.25	8	10
2	Neighbours	38	47.50	27	33.75	21	26.25	41	51.25	31	38.75	8	10
3	Local leader	23	28.75	40	50	17	21.25	25	31.25	36	45	19	23.75
II. Personal cosmopolite													
4	Farmers organizations	35	43.75	25	31.25	20	25	38	47.5	28	35	14	17.5
5	State Agriculture department officials	57	71.25	21	26.25	2	2.5	59	73.75	16	20	5	6.25
6	Scientists of SAUs and ICAR institutions	33	41.25	37	46.25	12	15	32	40	42	52.5	6	7.5
7	NGO personnel	18	22.50	18	22.5	44	55	22	27.5	17	21.25	41	51.25
III. Mass media													
8	Newspaper	22	27.50	23	28.75	35	43.75	27	33.75	20	25	33	41.25
9	Radio	0	0	3	3.75	77	96.25	0	0	7	8.75	73	91.25
10	TV	17	21.25	19	23.75	44	55	21	26.25	21	26.25	38	47.5
11	Mobile/ Internet services	19	23.75	31	38.75	30	37.5	27	33.75	25	31.25	28	35
12	Farm Magazines	12	15	15	18.75	53	66.25	14	17.5	18	22.5	48	60
13	Kisan mela/Exhibition	32	40	22	27.50	28	35	30	37.5	33	41.25	17	21.25

In the Personal Cosmopolite category, State Agriculture Department Officials are the most frequently used source (71.25% in Telangana, 73.75% in Andhra Pradesh), followed by Farmers' Organizations (43.75% in Telangana, 47.5% in Andhra Pradesh), Scientists from SAUs/ICAR Institutions (41.25% in Telangana, 40% in Andhra Pradesh), and finally, NGO Personnel, which are the least utilized (22.5% in Telangana, 27.5% in Andhra Pradesh).

The high reliance on State Agriculture department officials reflects that government extension services remain a critical source of information, The rythu vedikas of Telangana state have improved farmer interactions with AEOs (agriculture extension officers) at cluster level, However, accessibility is still limited in some remote areas. Where as Andhra Pradesh state has stronger extension networks through Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs), providing farmers with better extension services by VAAs (Village agriculture assistants) at village level and AEOs (agriculture extension officers) at cluster level. Scientists from SAUs & ICAR are consulted occasionally, indicating limited direct interaction between research institutions and farmers. NGO personnel have the lowest utilization, possibly due to lack of awareness.

It can concluded that in the Mass Media category, Kisan Melas/Exhibitions are the most frequently used information sources by the farmers(40% in Telangana, 37.5% in Andhra Pradesh), followed by Newspapers (27.5% in Telangana, 33.75% in Andhra Pradesh), Mobile/Internet-based services (23.75% in Telangana, 33.75% in Andhra Pradesh), TV (21.25% in Telangana, 26.25% in Andhra Pradesh), Farm Magazines (15% in Telangana, 17.5% in Andhra Pradesh), and finally, Radio, which is the least utilized source (0% in both states). Kisan Melas/Exhibitions are among the most attended events, indicating that interactive, hands-on learning is preferred by farmers, Newspapers still hold relevance, but their usage is moderate, possibly due to literacy constraints and limited agricultural content.

Mobile/Internet-based sources are emerging, especially in Andhra Pradesh, suggesting a gradual digital transition. TV remains a secondary source, possibly due to generalized content rather than localized advisory services. Radio is completely ignored, indicating a shift away from traditional broadcasting towards more visual and interactive media.

As results indicated in the Table.2, Distribution of respondents according to Utilisation behaviour of information sources, it is clear that most of the farmers (63.75%) of Telangana state had medium utilisation behaviour of information sources followed by low utilisation behaviour of information sources (26.25%) and high utilisation behaviour of information sources (10%). Whereas in case of Andhra Pradesh state, most of the farmers (60%) had medium utilisation behaviour of information sources followed by low utilisation behaviour of information sources (17.50) and high utilisation behaviour of information sources (22.50%).

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to Overall utilisation behaviour of information sources

S. No.	Category	Class Interval	Respondents(n=160)					
			Telangana farmers(n=80)		Andhra Pradesh farmers(n=80)		Total	
			f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Low	6-12	21	26.25	14	17.5	35	21.87
2	Medium	12-18	51	63.75	48	60	99	61.88
3	High	18-24	08	10	18	22.5	26	16.25
			80	100.00	80	100.00	160	100.00

From the above results, it is evident that the majority (61.88%) of farmers of both states had medium utilisation behaviour of information sources, followed High (16.25%) and Low (21.87%) utilisation behaviour of information sources.

The results are in line with the findings of Meera *et. al* (2004) [2].

Conclusion

The study on the utilization behaviour of information sources by paddy farmers in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh reveals a strong reliance on personal sources (family, friends, and neighbours) for agricultural information. Government extension services (State Agriculture Department Officials) are the most utilized formal source, highlighting their continued importance in agricultural advisory. However, scientists, NGOs, and mass media sources remain underutilized, suggesting a gap between research institutions and farmers. Farmers show moderate engagement with mass media sources, with Kisan Melas/Exhibitions emerging as a preferred source of knowledge due to their interactive and hands-on nature. While mobile and internet-based services are gaining traction, they are yet to become mainstream due to digital literacy challenges and infrastructure limitations. The complete neglect of radio as an information source indicates a shift towards visual and interactive communication methods.

Key Implications

1. Create awareness on digital platforms like farmer connect portal of APEDA etc to increase knowledge on exports and other such suggestions
2. Enhancing Digital Adoption: Expanding mobile-based advisory services, improving rural internet access, and conducting digital literacy programs will encourage better use of modern sources.
3. Bridging the Gap Between Farmers and Scientists: Organizing farmer-scientist interactions, on-farm demonstrations, and WhatsApp-based advisory groups will increase the relevance of scientific knowledge.
4. Expanding Practical Learning Opportunities: Increasing Kisan Melas, exhibitions, and field visits will ensure that farmers receive more practical, experience-based learning.
5. Many farmers lack access to real-time export market information and pricing trends, which affects their ability to make informed decisions.
6. Initiatives like the "Farmer Connect Portal" and other government-backed digital platforms should be promoted to enhance farmers knowledge of export regulations, demand forecasts, and international quality standards.
7. Organizing digital literacy programs in rural areas can help farmers utilize mobile apps and websites for export-related advisory services.
8. Strengthening Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) in Andhra Pradesh and Rythu Vedikas in Telangana to provide targeted advisory services on export-grade paddy production, quality certification, and residue-free farming.
9. Increasing KVK (Krishi Vigyan Kendra) and FPO (Farmer Producer Organization) interventions to educate farmers about global rice trade dynamics and government export incentives.
10. Facilitating regular interactions with agricultural scientists from PJTSAU (Telangana) and ANGRAU (Andhra Pradesh) to train farmers on producing low-residue, high-quality rice varieties that meet international standards

Enhancing the utilization behaviour of diverse information sources—particularly digital platforms, institutional advisory services, and export-market intelligence tools—is essential for empowering farmers in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh's rice-exporting regions. By integrating traditional knowledge with modern technology and global trade insights, farmers can maximize their export potential, improve profitability, and contribute to India's leadership in the global rice market

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