



Information Seeking Behaviour of the Farmers in Unchahar-Raebareli, Uttar Pradesh: A Survey

MANOJ KUMAR

Librarian, Dr. Ambedkar Government PG College, Unchahar-Raebareli, UP-229404

ABSTRACT

Agriculture is the main occupation of the peoples in India. A large population is engaged in the agriculture sector. In this paper the researcher had tried to understand the information seeking behaviour of farmers in Unchahar tehsil of Raebareli district of Uttar Pradesh. Here an attempt is made to understand information needs of farmers, sources used by them and what are the channels of information gathering. A survey is carried out on the 150 farmers of the tehsil, 50 farmers from each three development blocks of Unchahar were selected for the study.

KEYWORDS : information seeking behaviour, Farmers information needs, Information gathering etc.

INTRODUCTION:

Information seeking is a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or a gap in your knowledge. Information seeking behaviour encompasses information behaviour as well as the totality of unintended or passive behaviour as well as purposive behaviour that do not involve seeking, such as avoiding information. Farmers use different information sources and channels for seeking information on improved agricultural practices. The variability of knowledge acquired through different information sources and channels by the farmers depends on their personal characteristics, i.e. age, education, family type, family size, farming experience and extensive contacts.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Review of related literature is very important to do research on a new topic. The literature of information seeking behaviour available is greatly broad ranging. An attempt has been made to cover number of works that go beyond discussions of the information seeking behavior itself and its direct applications to closely related topics such as information seeking.

Chakrabarti studied the information seeking behaviour of Tatos a tribal community of Wes Bengal of India. He found that-

- (i) Tatos depends upon the priests, role models and headman of the community for their information needs.
- (ii) Illiteracy and ignorance is the main problem in accessing the information needed by the Tatos community.

Verma A. K., Meena H. R., Singh Y. P., Chander M. and Narayan R. carried out a survey in two districts which represented different ago-climatic zones of Uttar Pradesh state, namely Bareilly and Lakhimpur. Researchers selected a sample of 120 farmers. 60 farmers were selected from each district. The data were obtained from the farmers by the investigator with the help of a structured interview schedule and focus group discussion.

(i) Survey indicates that most of the farmers (45%) of Bareilly district were contacting frequently to neighbours followed by 21.7 percent progressive farmers, 15% contacting family members and friends. Whereas in case of Lakhimpur Kheri district majority of the respondents (48.3%) were contacting frequently to neighbours followed by 25 percent to progressive farmers, 20 percent to family members and 18.3 percent to friends for livestock related information.

(ii) In Bareilly district 11.7 percent respondents were frequently utilizing radio followed by equal numbers (10%) using newspaper and mobile phone as the source of information related to livestock farming while 6.7 and 5.0 percent farmers were getting information from television (TV) and magazine, respectively. While 13.3, 5.0 and 3.3% of the selected farmers were rarely getting information from radio, TV and internet respectively. Whereas in case of Lakhimpur Kheri district 18.3 percent respondents were frequently used radio followed by 13.3 and 11.7% respondents mobile phone and newspaper as the source of information related to livestock farming while 16.7 and 5% each of the selected respondents were rarely getting information from radio, TV and internet respectively.

(iii) Most of the farmers still not connected with the developmental agencies for latest information related to livestock services.

Njoku, I.F. carried out a survey on the information needs and information seeking behaviour of fish farmers in Lagos state of Nigeria. He conducted a survey on 500 fish farmers of different fishing communities in the state. The study analysed information needs, sources and information seeking behaviour as well as problems encountered by the farmers to gather the information. These are as under-

- (i) The information needs of the farmers was directly related to their occupation i.e. fish farming.
- (ii) Most of the respondents was illiterate, male adults and married.
- (iii) Most of the farmers were interested in credit facilities from the government side as their economic condition is very poor.
- (iv) They depend upon friends, relatives and neighbours to fulfill their information needs as these are the main source of information.
- (v) Unawareness was the main obstacle in information seeking.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

Here an attempt is made to get the answers of the following questions:

- Which kind of information is needed by farmers?
- What methods are used for seeking information by farmers?
- Use of information technology by the farmers in their daily information needs.
- In which language information is sought by farmers?
- Obstacles in information gathering?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To examine information seeking behaviour of farmers in Unchahar-Raebareli, Uttar Pradesh.
2. To determine the type of information used by the farmers.
3. To study the purpose of information seeking by farmers.
4. To explore the use of information technology.
5. To study the problems faced by the farmers while seeking and use information.
6. To reveal the use of language for seeking the information.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The scope of the study is Unchahar Tahsil of Raebareli district of Uttar Pradesh.

METHODOLOGY:

The present study is based on the primary data collected through 25 interview schedules filled up on the basis of response given by the farmers of each and every two villages of the entire three development blocks. Thus total 150 questionnaires were collected for the study.

ANALYSIS OF DATA:

Sr. No.	Development Block	No of the respondents
1.	Unchahar	50
2.	Rohaniya	50
3.	Jagatpur	50

Total	150
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Table-1: Collection of responses RESPONSE ACCORDING TO GENDER:

SR. No.	Name of Development Block	Frequency	Male		Female	
			No	%	No	%
1	Unchahar	50	46	92	4	8
2.	Rohaniya	50	40	80	10	20
3.	Jagatpur	50	40	80	10	20

Table-2: Gender ratio of farmers

The above table shows that approximately 80% farmers are male in the selected sample of study. Here it can be seen that in Unchahar agriculture sector is male dominating sector.

RESPONCES ACCORDING TO AGE:

SR. No.	Age Group	Frequency	%age
1	21-30	6	4
2	31-40	23	15.33
3	41-50	59	39.33
4	>51	62	41.34
Total		150	100

Table-3: Age of farmers

The table shows that maximum number of farmers is of more than 50 years (41.34%) whereas only 4% are from the age group of 21-30 years.

DISTRIBUTION OF FARMING LAND:

SR. No.	Farming land area (In acres)	Frequency	%age
1	0-1	56	37.33
2	2-3	58	38.67
3	3-5	27	18
4	>5	9	6
Total		150	100

Table-4: Availability of agriculture land

From the above table nearly 40% population is of small farmers. Only 6% farmers are having more than five acres farming land in Unchahar-Raebareli.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF FARMERS:

SR. No.	Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate	39	26
2	Primary level	42	28
3	Higher secondary	41	27.33
4	Graduation/ PG	28	18.67
Total		150	100

Table-5: Educational qualification of farmers

The table-5 shows that there are one fourth population (26%) farmers of study sample are not literate. It can also be seen that nearly one-fourth population is educated up to the primary level only. Only 18% population of the sample has college education.

TYPES OF INFORMATION:

SR. No.	Type of Information	Frequency	Percentage
1	Crop related	150	100
2	Seed related	150	100
3	Fertilizers	150	100
4	Pesticides	139	92.67
5	Govt. policies	66	44
6	Storage	49	32.66

7	Machinery etc.	17	11.33
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Table-6: Type of information needs

The table-6 reveals that all the farmers require information about crop, seed and fertilizers related information. Maximum number of farmers also requires pesticides' information followed by the government policies (44%), storage (33%) and machinery (11%) related information.

FREQUENCY OF INFORMATION SEEKING:

SR. No.	Information seeking	Frequency	Percentage
1	Daily	27	18
2	Weekly	43	28.67
3	Monthly	21	14
4	Seasonal	18	12
5	Often	41	27.33
Total		150	100

Table-7: Frequency

From this table it can be seen that 29% farmers require weekly information, 27% often, 18% daily, 14% monthly and 12% seasonally information.

INFORMATION SOURCES USED BY THE FARMERS:

SR. No.	Sources of information	Frequency	Percentage
1	Collogues	150	100
2	Leaders & role models	150	100
3	Inquiry to educated peoples	61	40.67
4	Extension officers	94	62.67
5	Internet	2	1.33
6	Library	0	0
7	Radio, TV	96	64
8	Newspapers	53	35.33

Table-8: Sources used by the farmers

The above table shows that friends, relatives and role models are the major sources of information in the agricultural community of the Unchahar-Raebareli according to all the respondents of the study sample. Radio and TV are also very rich sources of information to the farmers. Some farmers also use newspapers. Here percentage is more than the 100 due to multi responses.

MEDIUM USED BY THE FARMERS:

SR. No.	Medium	Frequency	Percentage
1	Personal contact	150	100
2	Telephone	77	51.33

Table-9: Medium used by farmers

The table shows that all the respondents gather information through their personal contact. While 51.33% also uses telephone in information seeking.

PROBLEMS BEFORE THE FARMERS:

SR. No.	Problems	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiteracy	39	26
2	Unawareness	103	68.67
3	Unavailability of information centers	148	98.67
4	Unwillingness of extension officers	142	94.67
5	Poverty	47	31.33

Table-10: Problems of the farmers

Unavailability of information centers is the major problem before the farmers of Unchahar- Raebareli as nearly 99% respondents says fol-

lowed by unwillingness of agriculture officials (94.67%), unawareness (68.67%), and poverty (31.33%).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS:

From the above discussions it can be concluded that male farmers are dominating in the agriculture sector of Unchahar. This is not good for any occupation. The education level of farmers is not very good. A large number of population is either illiterate or low educated. There should be a large number of educational institutions should be established in the area. Most of the farmers are not aware about the new tools and techniques of farming. There is no any information center is seen in the area. Although telephone is very popular among the farmers. Poverty is

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