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Information Seeking Behavior of Tapioca (Cassava) Growers in Salem District

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Introduction

Information seeking is a human process that requires adaptive and reflective control over the afferentand efferent actions of the information seeker. The study on information seeking behavior includes: the strategies people adopt for making discoveries, their expectations, attitudes, anxieties, promotion of relationships as they live and workwith other information users. Information seekers should begin with finding out the obstacles which deter progress,therebycreating an information gap / vacuum. An important aspect of sense making is a process in which people struggle to understand a problem that drives them to seek meaning; for in many situations and manycircumstances they are content to take no such action.

Therefore the need arises to find out if the tapioca growers are able to obtain the information they need as they go about searching for relevant and pertinent information. It is also important to find out what methods and sources of information they usually utilize while trying to meet their objectives. Sequel to these reasons, the researcher also studies the information and utilization patterns among tapioca growers in Tamilnadu.

Methodology

This study involved data collection and analysis purely based on the primary sources of information available from registered tapioca growers of the factory in Salem District. The registered tapioca growers of the factory were listed and stratified into three categories such as small, medium and large scale farmers. From the registered Tapioca growers, 117 sample respondents were selected at random. The primary data were collected with the help of pretested structured schedule by holding personal interview regarding utilization of information sources, knowledge level and socio-economic characteristics of the Tapioca growers. Thus the sample consisted of farmer's observations among the factories in Salem district.

Objectives:

01. To study the role of existing information sources and knowledge level of the Tapioca growers.

02. To examine the socio-economic characteristics and the problems faced by the Tapioca growers.

03. To find out the problems faced by the tapioca growers of Salem district in utilizing the information through agricultural research center.

04. To find out the utilization of credit facility by the Tapioca farmers of salem district.

05. To identify the constraints and provide suggestions for improving the existing information system.

Result and Discussion

Table: 1 Distribution of respondents according to the educational status

S.No.	Categories of Tapioca Farmers	Ill	Can Read Only	Pri	Mid	High	High Sec	College	Total	X^2	DF	LS
01	Small	14 (11.96)	4 (3.42)	8 (6.83)	3 (2.56)	5 (4.27)	4 (3.41)	2 (1.71)	40 (34.18)	64.45	12	0.01
02	Medium	12 (10.26)	3 (2.56)	5 (4.27)	4 (3.42)	4 (3.42)	6 (5.12)	3 (2.56)	37 (31.64)			
03	Large	3 (2.56)	2 (1.71)	6 (5.12)	5 (4.27)	6 (5.12)	6 (5.12)	12 (10.26)	40 (34.18)			
	Total	29 (24.77)	9 (7.7)	19 (16.24)	12 (10.25)	15 (12.82)	16 (13.68)	17 (14.54)	117 (100)			

As per the table among the various groups of farmers, High School level education is found more in large farmers. Illiteracy is found more in small and medium groups. Middle level education is more in medium farmers and college level education is more in large farmers. This difference is confirmed by the chi-square (64.45) obtained, which is significant at 1% level.

Table: 2 Knowledge level of tapioca growers in cultivation practices

S. No.	Categories of Sugar Cane Farmers	SBTT Treatments	Fertilizer Application	Weed Control	Pest And Diseases Control	Inter Cultivation Practice	Irrigation Management	Total
1	Small	6	12	5	5	4	8	40
2	Medium	4	10	3	5	6	9	37

3	Large	14	8	3	5	6	4	40
	Total	24	30	11	16	15	21	117

Calculated Chi-square Value = 19.44

Degrees of Freedom = 10

Level of Significance = 0.01

It is observed from the above table that irrespective of their farm size, majority of them have more knowledge in fertilizer application followed by SBTT treatments and weed control. But among the different groups of farmers, small and medium farmers have more

knowledge in fertilizer application, but large group farmers have more knowledge in SBTT treatments. This difference is confirmed by the obtained Chi-square value, which is significant at 1% level. Hence the stated hypothesis is accepted.

Table: 3 Utilization of Mass Media Sources

S. No	Categories of Tapioca Farmers	Utilization of Mass Media Sources										Total
		Radio		TV		Newspaper		Magazines/ Journals		Films and Video		
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1	Small	32	8	26	14	18	22	9	31	30	10	40
2	Medium	28	9	25	12	21	19	12	25	29	8	37
3	Large	26	14	23	16	24	16	21	19	25	15	40
	Total	86	31	74	42	63	57	42	25	84	33	170
		73.5%	26.5%	63.2%	36.8%	53.8%	46.2%	35.9%	64.1%	71.8%	28.2%	

It is seen from the table given above that, among the various sources of utilization of mass media majority of them receive knowledge through Radio (73.5%) followed by film and video (71.8%) and T.V (63.2%) irrespective of their land size. On the basis of their groups, small group farmers utilized radio more; large group farmers utilized radio, film and medium group farmers use radio, video more. So majority of the tapioca farmers receive information through radio, films and video.

Table: 4 Problems faced by the tapioca growers in utilizing the information obtained from training programmes.

S. No.	Categories of Tapioca Growers	No Information About source	Insufficient Time	No village Based Training.	Difficulties To Understand	Other	Total

1	Small	5	6	20	6	-	37
2	Medium	8	3	26	3	-	40
3	Large	6	5	21	8	-	40
	Total	19 (16.2%)	14 (12.0%)	67 (57.3%)	17 (14.5%)	-	117 (100%)

Calculated Chi-square Value = 4.690

Degrees of Freedom = 6

Level of Significance = Non significant

Regarding the problems faced by the tapioca growers in utilizing the information obtained from training programmes, it is observed from the above table that, irrespective of their categories, 57.3% of the farmers have told that the training programmes are not village based. 16.2% of them have no information about source, 12.0% of them complained of insufficient time, and 14.5% of them found it difficult to understand. This difference is not confirmed by the obtained Chi-square value, which is non-significant. Hence the stated hypothesis is accepted.

Table: 5 Problems faced by the tapioca growers in utilizing the information through Tamilnadu Agricultural Research Center

S. No	Categories of Tapioca farmers	Yes	No	Total
1	Small	28	12	40
2	Medium	26	11	37
3	Large	32	8	40
	Total	86 (73.5%)	31 (26.5%)	117 (100%)

Calculated Chi-square Value = 1.158

Degrees of Freedom = 2

Level of Significance = Non significant

It is seen from the table that irrespective of the categories 73.5% of the farmers face problems. But 26.5% of them did not face any problem. Category wise more number of medium group farmers did not face any problem. This difference is not confirmed, because it is non-significant. So the hypothesis is accepted.

Finding and Conclusion

- Out of the 117 samples selected for this study the following were the findings.
- Only large size tapioca growers have the higher level of education i.e. , high

school education and above.

- One fourth of the tapioca farmers have good experience in fertilizer application when compared to the other aspects of tapioca cultivation.
- Radio, films and video programmes and TV are the media mostly used by the tapioca growers.
- Majority of the tapioca growers (66.6%) have not attended the training programmes. Only large farmers attended the training programmes.

Suggestions

1. The farmers are not having frequent contacts with the staff of state agricultural department and this should be increased.

2. There should be a regular meeting with the staff of tapioca research centre, staff of state agricultural department, tapioca officers, development officers of sago serve factory for the purpose of exchanging information on latest technology.

3. The telecasting time for agricultural related programmes should be convenient for farmers i.e., it should be after 7p.m in seasons like sowing, harvesting etc.

4. The villages concerned with the sago industries should be developed to a good extent i.e., provisions of formal education at least upto higher secondary level and also health centers.

5. The local library should be well equipped with materials pertaining to agricultural information and the farmers should be motivated to use these materials.

6. The Government should provide subsidies for the farmers who use new techniques in tapioca cultivation.

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