May 2010

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Library Philosophy and Practice 2010

ISSN 1522-0222

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Introduction

Information is an indispensable source for decision-making at every level. It is a vital ingredient for the social development of a nation, especially developing countries like India. It is a well-accepted generalization that a country which is rich in information is rich in the social and economic spheres. Indian libraries have been slowly changing from the traditional and conventional status to a modern and sophisticated one. Modern techniques of information management have become indispensable in libraries.

Tapioca

Tapioca, also known as cassava (Manihot utillissima/Manihot esculenta Crantz), is a root crop. It is believed to have originated as a cultivated plant either in South Mexico and Central America or in northern South America (Regers, 1963; Renvoize,1972). It spread in cultivation to other tropical regions of the world. Cassava is widely grown, processed, and consumed in African countries, South America, and some parts of Asia, including India.

Tapioca is a storehouse of starch and energy and is ideal for processing into a large number of diverse value-added products. With India's population reaching around 1.5 billion by 2020, it is projected that there will be a net shortage of around 26 million metric tons of food grains. Tuber crops like tapioca can help bridge the gap in cereal production, by expanding the cultivation to non-traditional areas and realizing more yields from traditional/industrial belts.

In the global scenario of tapioca production, India ranks 13th in area, 7th in production, and 1st in productivity. Tapioca is cultivated in an area of 2.6 lakhs (260,000) hectares in India, with a total production of 6.06 million tons.

In Tamil Nadu, tapioca is being cultivated over an area of about 82,000 hectares, providing employment of thousands of workers. In Salem District alone, 34,000 hectares of land are under tapioca cultivation and there are about 1,500 units manufacturing Sago in and around Salem.

Tapioca is processed to be consumed in different forms and ways in different parts of the world. Tapioca starch is extracted and used as flour, cassava beets, fermented cassava beverages, alcoholic as

well as non-alcoholic beverages, and a number of products are prepared from tapioca roots in various countries of the world.

Related Studies

Adedibu and Adio (1997) surveyed the information needs and information seeking patterns of medical students at Lautech, Ogbomoso. The survey revealed that 70 percent of respondents spent 3-8 hours per week in the library for consulting books relevant to their areas of specialization. A survey was conducted by Ahanene (1991) to examine the use of libraries and information centers by the administrations and decision makers of the Imo state, Nigeria. Anderson and Huang (1993) discussed the need for training paraprofessional library users in new technologies with an emphasis of reference service. Biradar and Sampath Kumar (2000) evaluate the services and facilities offered by DVS Polytechnics College Library, Sghimoga. Cherry, et al., (1994) evaluated the effectiveness of a concept based computer tutorial for training online public access catalogue users.

Methodology

Data were collected using personal interviews and a questionnaire. Random sampling was used to select respondents. The sample was 155 small-scale industrialists who process tapioca. The data were analysed using statistical tools such as percentage and chi-square.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Sources of information before starting the business

Media	N	Percentage
Family	94	60.6
Friends	53	34.2
Relation	6	3.9
Governments	2	1.3
Total	155	100

Before starting a business, about three-fifths of respondents sought information from their family, and more than one-third from friends.

Table 2. Continuously receiving information related to business

Opinion	N	Percentage
Yes	121	78.1
No	34	21.9
Total	155	100

Nearly 80 percent of respondents continuously seek and receive information after starting a business.

Table 3. Opinion about receiving information

Opinion	N	Percentage
Enough	59	38.1
Timely received	30	19.4
Valuable	13	8.4
Reasonable price	53	34.2
Total	155	100

A majority of respondents feel that they have received enough information at a reasonable price.

Table 4. Type of information received

Types	N	Percentage
Raw material	6	3.9
Technology	56	36.1
Management	13	8.4
Market demand and supply	74	47.7
Production	6	3.9
Total	155	100

Most respondents received information related to market demand and supply. Market demand fluctuate, and it is natural that industrialists are eager to know market trends.

Table 5, Methods of receiving information

Method	N	Percentage
Weekly magazine	9	5.8
Association Journal	50	32.3
Patent reports	41	26.5
Tender reports	55	35.5
Total	155	100

Most respondents receive information from tender reports and journals of industrial associations.

Table 6. Frequency of receiving information

Frequency	N	Percentage
Daily	93	60.0
Weekly	6	3.9
Monthly	13	8.4
Four month once	9	5.8
Annually	34	21.9
Total	155	100

Most respondents receive information daily, using the daily tender.

Table 7. Mode of receiving information

Mode	N	Percentage
Brokers	44	28.4
Postal	6	3.9
Phone	6	3.9
Computer	15	9.7
Sago Serve	84	54.2
Total	155	100

More than half of respondents receive information from Sago Serve

Table 8. Sources of information on the price of sago and other products

Media	N	Percentage
Daily Thanthi	92	59.4
Kalai Kathir	15	9.7
Dinamalar	48	31.0
Total	155	100

Nearly three-fifths of respondents receive information from Daily Thanthi.

Table 9. Best agencies for information

Agencies	N	Percentage
Sago Serve	93	60.0
Brokers	62	40.0
Total	155	100

Respondents are split between Sago Serve and brokers as the best agencies for relevant information, but Sago Serve is preferred by 60 percent.

Table 10. Steps taken to preserve the information

Opinion	N	Percentage
Yes	124	80.0
No	31	20.0
Total	155	100

The overwhelming majority of respondents take some steps to preserve information.

Table 11. Method of preserving information

Method	N	Percentage
Records	121	78.1
Files	25	16.1
CDs	9	5.8
Total	155	100

Most respondents use files and records, with a small number preserving information on compact disc.

Table 12. Sources of technological information

Media	N	Percentage
Sago Serve	53	34.2
Conference	36	23.2
Co-Mill owners	50	32.3
Technology experts	16	10.3
Total	155	100

About one-third of respondents receive technological information through Sago Serve, and a similar number from mill owners, with conferences accounting for about one-quarter.

Table 13 Level of information use

Level	N	Percentage
High	37	23.9
Average	118	76.1
Total	155	100

More than three-quarters of respondents described their level of information use as "average."

Table 14 Level of satisfaction with information received

Level of satisfaction	N	Percentage
Fully	20	12.9
Partially Satisfied	39	25.2
Optimum	64	41.3
Not Satisfied	32	20.60
Total	155	100

Only 12 percent of respondents are fully satisfied with the information they receive, with more than 60 percent "partially" or "optimally" satisfied, and the remaining one fifth not satisfied..

Table 15. Age group and region information source

Age	Within District	Within State	Total
Up to 25	13	0	13
26 to 35	15	7	22
36 to 45	25	0	25
46 to 55	58	24	82
56 and above	13	0	13
Total	124	31	155

Irrespective of age, 80 percent of respondents receive information at the district level.

Conclusion

The result shows that a majority of respondents have continued their family business. Information seeking behaviour of these industrialists is continuous . The results reveal further that information is available to tapioca processors at a reasonable price. Price instability of starch and sago plays a dominant role in the field. Most respondents are seeking information relating to market demand and supply. Tender reports are the most common method of receiving information. Information is received daily in the form of these tender reports. Sago Serve is regarded widely as the best mode of receiving information. A majority receive information with 1-2 days and most consult Daily Thanthi to know the day-to-day price of sago and starch. Most take steps to preserve information. A maximum number of respondents preserve the information in the form of records. Most respondents get information through Sago Serve and co-mill owners. A majority of respondents receive information at the district level only.

The present research attempted to know how information systems support small scale industries. The research analysis furnished some useful findings. A considerable number of respondents received their optimum level of information, while some respondents are partially satisfied and some not satisfied. The information needs of unsatisfied and partially-satisfied respondents should be given priority. The barriers that block information flow must be identified and eliminated. Many respondents consulted information agencies for price and market demand information. This need is well- satisfied by tender reports, publication of price rates in Tamil dailies, etc. The Sago Serve website is very popular.

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