

EFFECTIVENESS OF INFORMATION SOURCES AS PERCEIVED BY THE SUB-ASSISTANT AGRICULTURE OFFICERS

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ABSTRACT

The specific objective of the study was to determine the effectiveness of information sources as perceived by the Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officers (SAAOs). Attempts were also made to determine eight selected characteristics of the SAAOs and their relationship with effectiveness of information sources. Ten information sources were considered in this study for measuring effectiveness. Data were collected from a sample of 100 SAAOs of the five Upazilas of Chapainawabgonj district. Pearson's correlation co-efficient was used to determine the relationships between the dependent and independent variables. It was revealed from the study that majority (90 percent) of the respondents' opined that these information sources were moderate to highly effective compared to only 10 percent of the respondents' opined these sources were less effective. In respect of relationship between dependent and independent variables it was revealed that except age and annual family income of the respondents all other characteristics such as service length, training received, organizational participation, job facilities, attitude towards rice production technologies and use of communication media were found to be significant.

Key words: Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer, information sources

INTRODUCTION

Communication is blood stream of development administration. In rural development nothing is more important than the transfer of useful ideas from the sources to users. To make farming communities better informed in the use of any innovation, the extension worker requires communication devices that can overcome the barriers of illiteracy and tradition which are pre-dominant among the resource poor farmers and drive home the message effectively. In this regard, an effective and efficient communication of farm information is an important prerequisite for promoting of agricultural innovations and practices. Contact with information source is a pre-condition to receive information and to use of technology in real situation (Kashem and Halim, 1991). In Bangladesh a few institutions including The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) provide agricultural extension services to the rural people. The DAE is the largest extension organization which is recognized as national extension service of Bangladesh. Its main objectives are to be providing information, to bring about changes among the farmers. For this purpose, technology generation, diffusion and its adoption are very much important. The more is the communication within and between extension workers and farmers, the faster will be the dissemination of information in the process of modernization of agriculture (Lionberger and Chang, 1970). For dissemination of information, the role of SAAO is very important. They are the key extension workers and change agents in this purpose. Farmers seek advice and information from them. The SAAOs use various information sources in receiving information related to agriculture.

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They use those sources which they think more effective and more reliable. Considering the importance of effectiveness of information sources in disseminating the farm technologies to the SAAOs, the present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To determine some selected characteristics of the SAAOs
2. To determine the effectiveness of information sources as perceived by the SAAOs
3. To explore the relationship between the selected characteristics of the SAAOs and effectiveness of information sources as perceived by them.

METHODOLOGY

Chapainawabgonj district of Rajshahi division was considered as the study area for the present study, which consists of five upazilas and 126 blocks. The researcher purposely selected all the blocks as the locale of the study. All the SAAOs of these blocks constituted the population of the study. From which 100 SAAOs (80% of the population) were selected at random as the sample representative. Data were collected through face to face interviewing using a structured interview schedule during 01 to 30 November, 2006. For the purpose of the study, eight characteristics of the SAAOs were considered as independent variables such as age, annual family income, service length, training received, organizational participation, job facility, attitude towards rice production technologies and use of communication media. The independent variables were measured assigning suitable score such as age was measured by actual year, annual family income by thousand Taka, service length by complete years of service, training received by total number of days, organizational participation by nature of participation multiplied by duration, job facilities by four point rating scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', attitude towards rice production technologies by Likert scale and use of communication media was measured by four point rating scale ranging from 'frequently use' to 'not use at all'. Effectiveness of information sources as perceived by the SAAOs was the dependent variable of the study. It was measured by assigning score against ten selected information sources and against each source there were five responses namely, very effective, effective, no opinion, not effective and not effective at all. Scores were assigned to these responses as 4,3,2,1 and 0 respectively. The total score was obtained for each respondent by summing the scores for his response. Thus, the scores of respondents could range from 0 to 40, where 0 indicating no effectiveness and 40 indicating maximum effectiveness. To find out the relationships, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was used. Five percent (0.05) level of probability was used as the basis of rejection any null hypothesis throughout the study. Tables were also used in presenting data for clarity of understanding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Selected characteristics of the SAAOs

The selected characteristics of the SAAOs have been discussed and a summary profile of these characteristics has been presented in Table 1, which indicated that the highest proportion of the SAAOs (66 percent) fell in the middle age group, while equal proportion of the respondents (17 percent) fell into young and old age group. Regarding income 64 percent of the respondents had medium income, compared to 33 percent low and only 3 percent high income. Data revealed that less than half of the respondents (44 percent) had long service length compared to 38 percent and 18

percent medium and short service length respectively. It was found that majority of the respondents received training short (76%) to moderate (21%). In extension service organizational participation is very important aspect. But in this study it was found that most of the respondent (87%) had low to no participation. Only 3 percent of the respondents had high organizational participation. In this study it was found that more than 90 percent of the respondents had got low to medium job facilities. It should be ensured for each SAAO for their better performance in extension work. In terms of dissemination of technologies SAAOs are the key person. So, every SAAO should have favourable and positive attitude towards any technology. In this study 91 percent of the respondent showed moderate to high favourable attitude while remaining 9 percent showed less favourable attitude. Use of communication media is one of the important pre-requisite for disseminating agricultural innovation to the farmers. This study showed that majority (76 percent) of the SAAOs belonged low to medium used category compared to 24 percent high category, which might be a cause for poor results in our extension work.

Table 1. Distribution of the SAAOs according to their selected characteristics

Sl. No.	Selected characteristics	Categories	Number	Percentage	Mean	S.D.
1.	Age	Young age(up to 35)	17	17	42.63	6.93
		Middle age (36-50)	66	66		
		Old age(Above 50)	17	17		
2.	Annual family income	Low (<1 lac)	33	33	116.43	35.52
		Medium(1-2 Lac)	64	64		
		High(>2 lac)	3	3		
3.	Service length	Short(Up to 12 years)	18	18	18.78	6.97
		Medium(13-24 years)	38	38		
		Long(above 24 years)	44	44		
4.	Training received	Short(Up to 5 days)	76	76	12.24	8.10
		Moderate(6-20 days)	21	21		
		Long(above 20 days)	3	3		
5.	Organizational participation	No participation (0)	6	6	5.94	5.39
		Low participation (1- 10)	81	81		
		Moderate participation (11 to 20)	10	10		
		High participation (Above 20)	3	3		
6.	Job facility	Low job facility (upto 28)	24	24	32.20	5.08
		Medium job facility (29-40)	67	67		
		High job facility (above 40)	9	9		
7.	Attitude towards rice production technology	Less favourable (upto 22)	9	9	26.48	3.22
		Moderately favourable (23-29)	61	61		
		High favourable (above 29)	30	30		
8.	Use of communication media	Low use (Up to 20)	39	39	31.18	7.71
		Medium use (21-40)	37	37		
		High use (41-60)	24	24		

Effectiveness of information sources as perceived by the SAAOs

Effectiveness of information sources as perceived by the SAAOs was the dependent variable of the study. It was measured by computing a score on the basis of their opinion on effectiveness of information sources in receiving information. Scores of the respondents ranged from 13 to 36. The average score was 25.28 with a standard deviation of 6.81. On the basis of these scores, the respondents were classified into the following three categories as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of SAAOs according to effectiveness of information sources as perceived by them

Categories	Respondents		Mean	S.D.
	Number	Percent		
Less effective (upto 18)	10	10	25.28	6.81
Moderately effective (19-30)	61	61		
Highly effective (above 30)	29	29		
Total	100	100		

Data presented in table 2 revealed that highest proportion (61 percent) of the respondents opined these communication media were moderately effective, while 29 percent and only 10 percent of the respondents opined these media were highly and less effective respectively. From this result it may be said that if one prefers an information media as effective source, he will use it more frequently and thus his communication exposure will also be increased. Individual media are good basis for obtaining technical know-how of any innovation. This may be a cause for selecting individual media as most effective information sources by the SAAOs.

Relationship between the selected characteristics of the SAAOs and effectiveness of information sources as perceived by them

Findings on the Table 3 revealed that there is positive significant relationship between service length and effectiveness of information sources at 0.05 level of probability. This indicated that more the experience in communication works more the effectiveness of information sources as they acquired sufficient experiences from long service. The finding of the present study also supports the study conducted by Akhouri (1973). Training provides knowledge, skill, views or attitudes towards different technologies which is also co-related significantly with the dependent variable. The present study supports the findings of the studies conducted by Pandey (1979) and Gangadharappa (1981). Organizational participation had positive significant relationships with the dependent variable. It is obvious that organizational participation encourages and motivates extension workers to use the various communication media effectively. The finding supports the observation of Stagner (1961). Job facilities are co-related significantly at 0.05 level of probability with effectiveness of information sources. It means that higher is the job facilities higher are the effectiveness of information sources which is supported by Weitz (1952) and Kahn (1964) in their studies. Attitude towards technologies

are also co-related significantly with the dependent variable which implies that more favourable attitude towards technology more the effectiveness of information sources as they maintain better contact with various communication media for obtaining information. Use of communication media had significant relationships with effectiveness of information source which means more use of media more effectiveness of information sources. The other two variables namely age, annual family income had insignificant positive relationships with effectiveness of information sources as perceived by SAAOs. It means that they had no significant influence on effectiveness of information sources as perceived by SAAOs.

Table 3. Co-efficient of correlation between selected characteristics of the SAAOs and effectiveness of information sources as perceived by them

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Value of 'r'	Table value of 'r' with 98 df at	
			0.05 level	0.01 level
Effectiveness of information sources as perceived by SAAOs	Age	0.102 ^{NS}		
	Annual family income	0.089 ^{NS}		
	Service length	0.375 ^{**}		
	Training received	0.395 ^{**}		
	Organizational participation	0.212 [*]	0.196	0.256
	Job facility	0.546 ^{**}		
	Attitude towards rice production technology	0.746 ^{**}		
	Use of communication media	0.570 ^{**}		

NS= Not significant, * Significant at $p < 0.05$, ** Significant at $p < 0.01$

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the above findings, the following remarks may be concluded:

1. Highest proportion (61 percent) of the SAAOs belonged to moderately effective category while 29 percent to highly effective category and only 10 percent to less effective category. Thus, majority (90 percent) of the respondents opined that these information sources had moderate to highly effective in case of receiving agricultural information.
2. Respondents' service length, training received, organizational participation, job facility, attitude towards rice production technology and use of communication media were found to have positively significant relationships with effectiveness of information sources as perceived by SAAOs which indicates that if the status of these characteristics increase their perceiveness of information sources are also increased.

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