Original Research

Information Management Behaviour of Dairy Farmers in Cuddalore District of Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken to critically analyze the Information management behaviour of dairy farmers in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. The data were collected from five villages of Mangalur block comprising of 60 respondents through structured interview schedule. The results revealed that Veterinarians were the major personal cosmopolite source of information. Family members and progressive farmers were the most preferred personal localite sources of dairy information on improved farm practices. Television was the most preferred impersonal cosmopolite source of dairy farming information. Dairy farmers discuss their ideas with family members to evaluate the information and try to memorize for further use in transfer of technologies in their farm situation. Efforts should be made to educate the farmers to participate in training, field days, field trip, exhibition for increasing awareness and knowledge and better understanding of technologies.

Key words: Dairy Farmers, Information Management Behaviour, Information Sources, Tamil Nadu

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Introduction

Dairying is a very important entrepreneurial activity in enhancing the socio-economic status of the rural poor by reducing the long lasting problems of unemployment and underemployment in India. It provides nutrition, draft animal power, organic manure, supplementary employment and cash income (Patel, 1993). The enlarged demand for milk and milk products will surely have implications for livestock production systems and for livestock producers in poor rural areas who are trying to adapt changing social economical market and trade circumstances (Rao *et al*., 2005). Adoption of improved farm practices by the dairy farmers varies, depending upon their situation and availability of information sources. Identification of most preferred information sources and channels by the dairy farmers will be helpful for extension agencies and

persons engaged in transfer of technology programmes, thus selection of appropriate information sources is very important for effective and rapid transfer of technologies (Sharma *et al.*, 2008). The choice and use of different sources and channels of dairy information depend on the credibility of the information channel. Therefore keeping in view of the above situation, an effort was made to ascertain more about the Information management behaviour of dairy farmers in Cuddalore district.

Materials and Methods

Mangalur block in the Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu was purposively selected for the study owing to the researcher's familiarity to culture, local dialect and access to the infrastructure. This would facilitate good rapport with the farmers so as to explore the facts and obtain valid responses towards the objectives fixed for the study. From Mangalur block, five villages were selected based on the cattle population. From each village, 12 farmers were randomly selected and thus a total sample of 60 respondents were chosen for the present research work and the data were collected by using a structured interview schedule. In this study information management behaviour was studied under three different categories, viz., Information input pattern, Information processing pattern and Information output pattern. The responses were obtained through a three point continuum i.e. frequently, occasionally and never with the score 3, 2 and 1 were respectively. Data were analysed and ranked with the help of Total Score (TS), Mean Percent Score (MPS) and Weight Mean Score (WMS).

Result and Discussion

The sources and channels available to dairy farmers for seeking information on improved dairy practices were studied under three categories and presented in Table 1.

Information Input Pattern

Information input pattern was studied under two categories, viz. frequency of contact and usefulness of sources and presented below.

Frequency of Contact of Information Sources

In personal cosmopolite sources, Veterinarians (MPS 86.11 & WMS 2.58) were most frequently contacted by the respondents followed by para veterinarians (MPS 77.22 & WMS 2.32), dairy co-operatives' personnel (MPS 68.89 & WMS 2.07) and private dairy personnel (MPS 48.33 & WMS 1.45). The University scientists (MPS 33.33 & WMS 1.00) were the least preferred cosmopolite information sources. Veterinarians being accessible to the farmers might have been contacted regularly to seek information on improved practices in dairy. Similar findings were reported by Nande *et al.* (2009).

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Table 1: Sources and channels of dairy information utilized by farmers for information seeking on improved dairy farm practices (n=60)

S. No.	Sources	Frequency of Contact				Usefulness of Contact			
		TS	MPS	WMS	Rank	TS	MPS	WMS	Rank
I	**Personal Cosmopolite Sources**								
1	Veterinarians	155	86.11	2.58	1	165	91.67	2.75	1
2	Para veterinarians	139	77.22	2.32	2	134	74.44	2.23	2
3	Private dairies	87	48.33	1.45	4	85	47.22	1.42	4
4	Dairy co-operatives	124	68.89	2.07	3	124	68.89	2.07	3
5	University scientists	60	33.33	1	5	60	33.33	1	5
II	**Personal Localite Sources**								
1	Family members	171	95	2.85	1	163	90.56	2.72	1
2	Friends	138	76.67	2.3	3	134	74.44	2.23	2
3	Neighbours	130	72.22	2.17	4	120	66.67	2	5
4	Relatives	129	71.67	2.15	5	124	68.89	2.07	4
5	Progressive farmers	141	78.33	2.35	2	130	72.22	2.17	3
6	Local leaders	88	48.89	1.47	6	91	50.56	1.52	6
III	**Impersonal Cosmopolite Sources**								
1	Television	125	69.44	2.08	1	119	66.11	1.98	1
2	Radio	73	40.56	1.22	2	70	38.89	1.17	2
3	Newspaper	64	35.56	1.07	3	65	36.11	1.08	3
4	Internet	60	33.33	1	4	60	33.33	1	4
5	Books	60	33.33	1	5	60	33.33	1	5
6	Magazines	60	33.33	1	6	60	33.33	1	6

Among personal localite sources, family members (MPS 95.00 & WMS 2.85), progressive farmers (MPS-78.33 & WMS 2.35), friends (MPS 76.67 & WMS 2.30), neighbours (MPS 72.22 & WMS 2.17) and relatives (MPS 71.67 & WMS 2.15) were the most preferred sources of dairy farmers for seeking information. Local leaders (MPS 48.89 & WMS 1.47) were least preferred information sources. Similar findings were reported by Nande *et al.* (2009) and Chauhan & Kansal (2014). Television (MPS 69.44 & WMS 2.08) was the most preferred impersonal cosmopolite sources of dairy information as perceived by the respondents. These findings got support from Garai *et al.* (2012) and Chauhan & Kansal (2014). Radio (MPS 40.56 & WMS 1.22), newspaper (MPS 35.56 & WMS 1.07), internet (MPS 33.33 & WMS 1.00), books (MPS 33.33 & WMS 1.00) and magazines (MPS 33.33 & WMS 1.00) were utilized by only few respondents in information seeking.

Usefulness of Information Sources

Veterinarians (MPS 91.67 & WMS 2.75) were the most useful personal cosmopolite source for the farmers. Para veterinarians (MPS 74.44 & WMS 2.23), dairy co-operatives' personnel (MPS 68.89 & WMS 2.07) and private dairy personnel (MPS 47.22 & WMS 1.42) were accorded second, third and fourth ranks respectively. The university scientists were the least useful cosmopolite information source in the study area (MPS 33.33 & WMS 1.00). Among personal localite sources, family members (MPS 90.56 & WMS

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2.72) were the most useful source followed by friends (MPS 74.44 & WMS 2.23), progressive farmers (MPS 72.22 & WMS 2.17), relatives (MPS 68.89 & WMS 2.07), neighbours (MPS 66.67 & WMS 2.00) and local leaders (MPS 50.56 & WMS 1.52) as perceived by the farmers. During the investigation it was observed that farmers discussed within the family members to solve their problems related to dairy farming. Television (MPS 66.11 & WMS 1.98) was the most preferred impersonal cosmopolite channel of dairy information as perceived by the respondents. Radio (MPS 38.89 & WMS 1.17), newspaper (MPS 36.11 & WMS 1.08), internet (MPS 33.33 & WMS 1.00), books (MPS 33.33 & WMS 1.00) and magazines (MPS 33.33 & WMS 1.00) were utilized by only few respondents in information seeking. Radio, newspaper, internet, books and magazines were the potential sources of dairy farming information, the farmers were not using these sources due to lack of knowledge about these sources.

Information Processing Pattern

Information processing pattern was studied under two categories, viz. evaluation of information and preservation of information and presented below.

Evaluation Items

Majority of the respondents evaluated the received information through discussing with family members (MPS 93.89 & WMS 2.82), referring their past experiences (MPS 88.33 & WMS 2.65) and discussing with progressive farmers (MPS 81.67 & WMS 2.45). Similar findings were reported by Garai *et al.* (2012) and Manhas *et al.* (2013). Accepted information as such and discussing with university scientists were least methods used by the dairy farmers (Table 2).

Table 2: Evaluation items utilized by farmers for seeking information on improved dairy farm practices (n=60)

S. No.	Evaluation Items	TS	MPS	WMS	Rank
1	Discussing with family members	169	93.89	2.82	1
2	Discussing with progressive farmers	147	81.67	2.45	3
3	Discussing with neighbours and friends	146	81.11	2.43	4
4	Discussing with staff of the animal husbandry department like AD/VAS	123	68.33	2.05	6
5	Discussing with scientists of the university	60	33.33	1	9
6	Referring to the past experience	159	88.33	2.65	2
7	Considering economic profitability	128	71.11	2.13	5
8	Considering simplicity-complexity in use	116	64.44	1.93	7
9	Accepted as such	68	37.78	1.13	8

Methods of Preservation

Table 3 indicated that most of the dairy farmers preferred to preserve the information in memory alone (MPS 94.44 & WMS 2.83). Findings were in line with those reported by Garai *et al*. (2012) and Meena *et*

al. (2017). None of them preserved the information in CD nor pen drive nor personal computers. Farm literatures, writing in notebook or preserve the newspaper cutting were least preferred by the respondents.

Table 3: Methods of preservation by farmers for seeking information on improved dairy farm practices (n=60)

S. No.	Methods of Preservation	TS	MPS	WMS	Rank
1	Memorizing it	170	94.44	2.83	1
2	Telling family members to remember	159	88.33	2.65	2
3	Preserve the newspaper cutting	67	37.22	1.12	4
4	Preserve the printed materials like leaflets, folders, bulletins etc.,	75	41.67	1.25	3
5	Taking down in a notebook	66	36.67	1.1	5
6	Preserve the information in CD/Pen drive/Personal computers	60	33.33	1	6

Information Output Pattern

The information output pattern was analysed and presented (Table 4). Disseminating information with family members and relatives (MPS 91.67 & WMS 2.75) and next to those who come and ask them (MPS 76.67 & WMS 2.30) were the most preferred way in transfer of technologies. Similar results were also reported by Garai *et al.* (2012), Manhas *et al.* (2013) and Meena *et al.* (2017).

Table 4: Methods of dissemination by farmers for seeking information on improved dairy farm practices (n=60)

S. No.	Methods of Dissemination	TS	MPS	WMS	Rank
1	Family members and relatives	165	91.67	2.75	1
2	Neighbours and friends	133	73.89	2.22	3
3	Those who come and ask	138	76.67	2.3	2
4	All the dairy farmers	106	58.89	1.77	4

Conclusion and Recommendation

a) Veterinarians were the major personal cosmopolite source for dairy farmers located in the study area. Hence it is suggested that the authorities may consider the filling of existing vacant posts of veterinary assistant surgeon (VAS) for the well-being of farmers in the area.

b) Family members and progressive farmers were the most preferred personal localite sources of dairy information on improved farm practices. To enhance the efficiency of progressive farmers in transfer of technologies, there is a compelling need to equip them with technically accurate information through training and other educational programmes and the field workers could use them to the maximum possible extent.

c) Television was the most preferred impersonal cosmopolite source as perceived by the respondents. Radio, newspaper, internet, books and magazines were the potential sources of dairy farming information, the farmers were not using these sources due to lack of knowledge about these sources. Hence it is recommended to establish a well-equipped dairy information centre with well equipped with

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ICT equipments, farm magazines and literatures in order to provide necessary information to farmers in the area.

d) Efforts should also be made to educate the farmers to participate in training, field days, field trip, exhibition for increasing awareness and knowledge and better understanding of technologies.

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