Awareness of Agricultural and Welfare Schemes among SC Agriculturists in Parangipettai Union, Cuddalore District

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Abstract

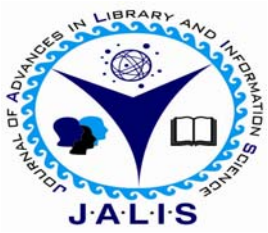
Highlights the information in the field of agriculture and the role of mass media in Agricultural information retrieval. Brings the different Agricultural and Welfare Schemes for SC/ST agriculturists in India sponsored by Central and State governments. Analyses the awareness of Scheduled Caste Agriculturists in terms of sources of information. Government agencies used, types of programmes, training, difficulties in getting awareness of Agricultural and Welfare Programmes

Keywords

Awareness of Schemes, Agriculture, Cuddalore Dt

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INTRODUCTION

The village is a basic unit of social, economic and cultural life of the Indian Society. It is also a center of political and administrative activity. Village studies have gained strong foothold in all disciplines. As a welfare state the Indian constitution has committed itself to the welfare and development of its people in general and of vulnerable sections in particular. Article 46, a directive principle of state policy declares, "The state shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of race, caste, religion, sex or place of birth. Article 15(2) says nothing shall prevent the state from making special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the SCs and STs. Constitutional provisions have been concretized by the Indian state through policies especially for the development of SCs and STs. The task in this paper in to critically look at the information Awareness of SC agriculturists about agricultural schemes and welfare schemes in rural areas.

AWARENESS OF AGRICULTURAL AND WELFARE SCHEMES

The agricultural literature appears in wide variety of sources. Nearly 2, 50,000 documents are published in the field of agriculture every year in 13,000 periodicals. Out of which 6,000 are the exclusive agricultural periodicals which carry agricultural information to the agriculturists. Because of its multidisciplinary nature and of its world wide scope and also the compelling needs for the agricultural production, by the humanity, the agricultural literature has a great potential. Agricultural information is one of the vital factors for the success of agriculturists. Adequate importance to these aspects of information dissemination has been given in developed countries. But in developing countries like India where there is an urgent need for agriculturists to have proper information facility in agricultural and welfare schemes, number of studies conducted in in the area of information awareness of agriculturists are very low.

The village level worker, mass media and the fellow villagers are the significant source of awareness for all the schemes of department of agriculture and welfare. The village level worker is the chief agent of developmental work in rural areas. Generally it is believed that most of the rural agriculturists depend

upon the village workers for their information about the agricultural and welfare schemes.

OBJECTIVES

The major objectives of the study are

1. To bring the different information sources through which SC agriculturists get information about agricultural and welfare schemes;
2. To identify the agriculturists who acquire information from various government sources;
3. To study the effect of mass media in the dissemination of agricultural and welfare information and
4. To test the awareness, participation difficulties and opinion of different agricultural and welfare schemes.

METHODOLOGY

In this study interview schedule has been used for collection of data. Since the most of the agriculturists are illiterate in rural areas, information has been gathered through face to face interview. The major areas covered in this study are information sources, government bodies, effect of mass media and awareness of SC agriculturists. 50 interview schedule have been prepared to get information from the agriculturists belong to scheduled castes. 10 villages from Parangipettai Union were selected and 5 persons from each village were choses as respondent.

ROFILE OF CUDDALORE DISTRICT AND PARANGIPETTAI UNION

Cuddalore district is located in the northern east coastal area of Tamilnadu. It has a population of 10, 68,750 with a SC population of 3, 53,605. It has a literacy rate of 47%. The rivers Vellaru, old Kollidam and Uppanaru are the chief sources of irrigation for the area of 5,84,329 hectares in this district. Parangipettai Union has a population of 1, 18,750 in 41 village Panchayats. Out of the population, SC and ST population are 26,866 and 403 respectively. The total area of the land in Parangipettai Union is 53,842 acres.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Sources of information

S.No.	Sources	Response
1.	Friends	24 (11.31%)
2.	Relatives	25 (12.00%)
3.	News papers	41 (19.70%)
4.	Radio	40 (19.00%)
5.	Television/Internet	37 (17.80%)
6.	Government Agencies	15 (07.00%)
7.	Posters/Notices	19 (09.00%)
8.	Private company Representative	07 (04.20%)

It is found from the table that 19.7%, 19.0% and 17.8% of farmers prefer News papers, Radio and TV and Internet respectively for getting information. Secondly 12% and 11.3% of users depend on friends and relatives respectively. The least percentage (4.2) goes to the source private company representative. It is proved that mass media like news paper, ratio and TV and Internet are the soul of the Agrarian society.

Table 2: Types of Information From Government Agencies

Table 2

S. No.	Agency	Response (%)
1.	Agricultural Department	40 (22.47%)
2.	Adi Dravidar Department	39 (21.92%)
3.	Department of Rural Development	40 (22.40%)
4.	Banks	09 (05.05%)
5.	Village Workers	10 (05.62%)
6.	Agricultural Universities	15 (07.00%)

It is clear that 22.47% of farmers get information from Agricultural department, Department of rural development and Banks and secondary 21.92% from Adi dravidar department. The least percent goes to village workers. It is also evident that while the government department are functioning well in discriminating the information village workers and agricultural universities are functioning below the expectations.

Table 3: Categories of News Papers

S.No.	News Papers	Response (%)
1.	Daily Thanthi	27 (41.54%)
2.	Dinamalar	10 (15.38%)
3.	Dinakaran	05 (07.69%)
4.	Dinamani	23 (35.39%)

Regarding the newspaper sought by the agriculturists to get information, Daily Thanthi and Dinamani occupy the first and second place respectively in the

retrieval of agricultural information and Dinamalar is in the third position.

Information through radio and television

When the question was asked about the choice of media 36 (60%) prefer radio and 24 (40%) prefer television. Inspite of the introduction of many cable TV programmes, the farmers still prefer All India Radio and Doordharshan for getting agricultural information. The population programmes in Radio are Arivom Ayirum mun 15 (41.68%), Velanmani Payeir Padhukappu 11 (30.56%) and Agricultural Flash news 10 (27.76). The popular programmes in TV are crop protection 14 (58.33%) and Use of pesticides 10 (41.67%). Regarding the opinions about the agricultural programmes through Radio and Television, 28 (56%) agriculturists feel that the programmes are not useful and 22 (44%) feel that the programmes are helpful.

Participation in Agricultural Programmes

Regarding the participation of different agricultural programmes, 30 (60%) answer that they have not participated any agricultural programme where as 20 (40%) have participated in the agricultural programmes. Moreover, 27 (54%) of agriculturists feel that the agricultural programmes organized by the department are not useful.

AGRICULTURISTS AND WELFARE PROGRAMMES

It is evident that 33 (66%) agriculturists are not aware of welfare programs in agriculture and 17 (34%) agriculturists are aware of welfare programmes. The reason may be the insufficient publicity given to these programmes. The welfare programmes which are familiar to the respondents are subsidy on seeds, crop protection measures. Agricultural loan facilities, Adidravidar welfare schemes, distribution of fertilizers and pesticides, 28 (56%) farmers utilize welfare programmes designed for agriculturists where as 22 (44%) are not the beneficiaries of the programmes. When the agriculturists were asked to mention the reasons for not utilizing programmes they mentioned the reasons as (a) Non availability of information (32.06%), (b) Non availability of guidance (33.97%) and (c) Respondents are not in need for such welfare programmes (33.97%). 21 (42%) respondents assess that the welfare programmes are partially inefficient where as 15 (30%) respondents feel that the welfare programmes are insufficient. Only 14 (28%) respondents are in favour of sufficiency.

Regarding the difficulties in getting information about welfare schemes, 19 (32.21%) users face difficulties due to improper guidance, 15 (25.43) face problems due to the insufficient publicities, 14 (23.72%) respondents are in problem due to the negative attitude of the welfare workers and 11 (18.64%) respondents face problems due to non-availability of information in news papers.

When the agriculturists were asked to correlate the welfare programmes and community development, 22 (44%) farmers respond that there is a moderate relationship between programmes and community development. 15 (30%) respondent view that there is no relationship and 13 (26%) respond that there is good relationship.

FINDINGS

The major findings that have evolved from the analysis given above are following.

1. The suitable media for getting agricultural information are newspaper, radio and television and internet rather than government agencies, posters, private companies etc.

2. The agriculturists depend mostly on Agricultural department, Department of Rural development Banks and Adi dravidar department rather than village workers and agricultural universities.

3. Daily Thanthi and Dinamani are the dominant news papers in retrieving agricultural information.

4. Again Radio and Television are the dominant media for agricultural information, even though there are several criticisms about the performance of these media.

5. Large number of users are not in favour of agricultural programmes and welfare programmes due to the non availability of guidance, non availability of information, wrong attitudes of the welfare workers etc.

SUGGESTIONS

A few suggestions are given below which if implemented would be helpful in resolving a number

of problems confronted by scheduled caste agrarian community.

1. Since most of the agriculturists depend on mass media for getting agricultural programme, the mass media should come forward to deliver useful variety programmes to the agriculturists.

2. Since the services of village workers and agricultural universities are below normal, welfare workers and agricultural universities should take suitable measures to perform well.

3. Wide publicity and proper guidance should be given by the government to make welfare programme success. The negative attitude of the welfare workers should be changed by giving suitable training programmes.

4. To conduct varies awareness programmes through internet in the remote villages for the benefit of village workers.

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