A STUDY OF INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS OF FARMERS OF KOPPAL AND RAICHUR DISTRICT OF HYDERABAD KARNATAKA REGION

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Abstract:

This paper present here the findings of the information literacy skills among the farmers community in the rural area of Hyderabad Karnataka region. The survey was conducted in Raichur and Koppal districts, where 200 farmers participated in the survey. The survey was aimed to explore the information literacy skills of the farmers and use of information sources available in rural area to access the information related to basic needs, agriculture information, information about government schemes, latest agricultural technology, market rates etc. and the information sources such as; TV, SMS through cell phones, grocer shops, newspaper and radio and human sources. The findings indicate that the Electronic sources (i.e. TV) is the main source of information for majority of people in rural area. Further, the result shows that extent of use of various information sources available at rural areas. 94.20% TV and 66.67% Rural Shops are the major sources of information, 85.29% responded that they use cell phone for both to talk with family as well as with agriculture office. It was recommended that to improve information literacy, there is a need for awareness program to be conducted by the Gram Panchayat level, it helps farmer to know about the technologies, market rates, new government plans introduced. Further, an effort is to be made to utilize the human sources of information in rural area (e.g. teacher, doctor, panchayat officer, agriculture officer etc.).

Introduction:

Agriculture is the main occupation in India, up to now 53% (IAMR-Dec 2012) [11] of the Indian population is depending on agriculture. Agriculture is not only produces food for the mankind also it supplies the raw materials for industries. Government of India and Karnataka has introduced many programs to promote agriculture. State of Karnataka is the eighth largest in the country having an area of 1.91 lakh sq. kms. Karnataka has 56,682 rural habitations including 27,017 Revenue villages. According to 2001 census, about 348 lakhs of its people, out of a total population of 448 lakhs live in these rural habitations. That constitutes about 69% of the State's population and about 62 lakhs households who live in the rural areas depend mainly on agriculture. There are various sources of agricultural

information available in rural areas such as fellow farmers, agricultural extension offices, print material such as leaflets, brochures, newspapers and books, radio, television, telephone and internet, leaders, NGOs etc. To make use of these information sources, farmer needs to learn how to use and how to approach information centers. Information literacy increases the ability to use, locate and identify information and information sources properly. In general Information literacy educates the user's ability to locate, recognize and evaluate it properly and get through proper information channels. It helps them to get right information in right time. Information literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life to see, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupations and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion for all nations (Garner 2006)[2]. The concept of information literacy was first put forward by Mr. Paulzurkowski, president of information industry association of the united states in 1974 who described information literacy as "the competence to use information, study information technology, and mold information solutions to problems" (Akanda E A, 2012)[1].There are many information sources in rural areas both formal and informal information channels but the rural community does not know how to utilize. IL is described in the Alexandria Proclamation of 2005, as essential for individuals to achieve personal, social, occupational and educational goals. IL skills are necessary for people to be effective lifelong learners and to contribute in knowledge societies. This is why IL was endorsed by UNESCO's Information for All Programme (IFAP) as a basic human right (Nataraj M, 2008) [3].

Based on this conceptualization, we may paraphrase a definition for "farmers' information literacy" in the following way: the discovery and receiving the needed information by farmers themselves and their ability in absorbing and utilizing the acquired information contents to satisfy their information searching objectives. This definition specifically covers three focused issues; namely, 1) Farmers' awareness of a need of information and the relative importance of such information; 2) their ability to access and use information effectively and efficiently; and 3) their level of methodological sophistication in getting their needed information through the use of new cutting-edge information technologies and new media channels (Jiaoping YU, 2009) [4].

In this background, we did survey to explore the concept of information literacy and competency level of rural communities in north karnataka region of Raichur and Koppal Districts. Two tools were used to procure data, one from farmers and the other from common public. Study analyzes that rural community's mainly required information on Purchase of basic goods 70.74%and Education 60.05% as against the farmers in rural areas 59% for education. So rural and farmers are showing keen interest to educate themselves to become independent in the society.

Review of Literature:

A large number of literatures published on Information Literacy, but very small amount of work has been done so far related to Information Literacy on Farmers and Rural community. Research need to carried on rural communities. There is a need for extension agents to laymore emphasis on sustainable practices and also to disseminate information to them and address their needs properly. Eamin A. A. and Md. Roknuzzaman. Jacobs S J and Herselman M. E. 2012 [5].. Discussed about the ICT hub model can be used or applied in any rural community to address and assist with the provision ICT and integrated services (2005)[6].Ogungbeni John, WakiluOgungbo and OlatejuAdeleke (2013). Studied about the farmers information needs and mentioned causes of accessing agricultural information as highrate of illiteracy, lack of financial support, inadequatetransport facility, lack of rural electrification, ignorance ofgovernment responsibility, etc., have caused themproblems in accessing agricultural information properly[7]. NicholausMwalukasa (2013). The study findings revealed that most farmers received their agricultural information through mediated and professional inter-personal methods. Major reliable channels of disseminating agricultural information for climate change adaptation were neighbors and fellow farmers, radio and extension workers [8]. Blattman Christopher, Jensen Robert and Roman Raul (2003). Understand that half of the farmers check market prices before selling their crop, only word of mouth is their prices sources of information. Only 7% of the farmers / rural communities get the market and agriculture information from newspapers, radio and television [9]. Chisenga Justin, Entsua Clement and Sam Joel (2007) Farmers are looking for sources of financing the fact that the major sources of information for the small-scales poultry farmers in the country of Ghana are their farmers associations. Networking and information sharing among the small-scale poultry farmers and with their associations is vital. Other notable sources of information that are the local FM radio stations and local television channels, which on average received 14 (56%) mentioning each as sources of information on local markets, sources of finance, government incentives, government policies, poultry and poultry imports, and the Avian Influenza virus[10].

Profile of Koppal and Raichur districts of Hyderabad Karnataka region:

Raichur:

The district is bounded on the North by the district of Gulberga, on the West by the districts of Bijapur and Dharwar , on the east by maboobunagara, Andhra pradesh. The geographical area of the district, according to the Central statistical organization of the Government of India, is 14,013 Sq Kilometers which works out to 5410 sq. miles. The Raichur district consists of four talukas: Deodurga, Lingsugur, Manvi and Sindhnur. The population of the district is

19,28,812 as per the 2011 census. Literacy rate is 59.56%. The two rivers, Tungabhadra and Krishna flows through the district. Agriculture is the main occupation of the farmers and main crops are Jawar, Rice, Tore Dal, Groudnut etc.

Koppal :

Koppal is situated between 15* 09' 00" to 16* 03' 30" North latitude and 75* 47' 30" to 76* 48' 10" East Longitude of karantaka. It consists of four talukas viz :**Koppal, Gangavathi, Kushtagi &Yelburga.**Koppal district is surrounded by Raichur district in the east, Gadag district in the West, Bagalkot district in the north, Bellary district in the south.

The total population of the koppal district is 13, 89,920 in 2011 census. Literacy rate is 68.09% compared to 54.10% as per the 2001census. The total workforce of Koppal district is 46.46% of the total population. The main worker population comprises of 35.37% of the total population and 11.08% is the marginal workers. Of the total working population 22.5%, 15.19% are cultivators and agricultural workers respectively.

Table-1: Demographical Detail

District	Raichur	Koppal
Talukas	4	4
Hoblis	37	20
Inhabited Villages	830	596
Habited villages	53	41
Town Panchayat	10	4
Gram Panchayat	164	134
Population	19, 28,812	13, 89,920
Literacy	59.55	68.09

Sources :www.koppal.nic.in and www.raichur.nic.in

Objective of the Study:

- To Identify the information needs of the farmers
- To identify the Channels of information available and use.
- To identify the extent of use of different information sources.
- To evaluate the information sources it terms of its authenticity, reliability, accuracy and objectivity
- To find the extent of use of collected information

Methodology:

The Two districts were selected for the present study Raichur and Koppal which are the part of the Hyderabad Karnataka region and economically back warded nature. Agriculture is the main sources of income; most of the cultivated land is wet land. The farmers are fully depending on rain.

Total 40 villages were identified from both Raichur and Koppal district which has highest Literacy rate. 10 families based on agriculture were randomly selected from each Village for data collection. A total of 400 Sem-structured questionnaires were prepared and distributed among them personally; out of which 339 were responded positively and the response rate was 85%. Technological tools used to analyze data are, MS windows, Excel and SPSS.

Findings of the Study:

Table-2 Indicates that majority respondents are male from both the places of Raichur and Koppal 57.40% of 62.35% respectively. The highest 83 respondents (49.11%) belongs to age group of 16-25 in Raichur district and 61 respondents (35.88) belongs to 36-45 age groups in koppal district. It indicates that young and middle age people are covered compared to the age group of 46-55 are involved in agriculture. As the literacy rate is high in koppal district as per the 2011 census 68.09% compared to Raichur 59.555, in this table also shows that majority of 72 respondents (42.35%) completed degree. Income level of the respondents from raichur is more no. of respondents 62 (36.69%) fall in the below poverty line as their income is less than 30000. 75.15% and 80.59 respondents owned TV in both the districts, 35.29% use of internet through cell phone or through computer as it becomes compulsory because all government project or plans are introducing through internet like, obtaining ration card, Election card, adhaar card, employment, compensation etc. Majority 95.29% of people are living at their own house in rural and 82.94% respondents having cell phones.

Table – 2: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Farmers:

	Raichur		Koppal	
Heading	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Gender :				
Male	97	57.40	106	62.35
Female	72	42.60	64	37.65
Age :				
16-25	83	49.11	55	32.35
26-35	47	27.81	42	24.71
36-45	31	18.34	61	35.88
46-55	7	4.14	12	7.06
Education :				
Primary School	39	23.8	27	15.88
High School	11	6.51	24	14.12
PUC	64	37.87	47	27.65
Degree	57	33.73	72	42.35
Annual Income :				
Upto 30000	62	36.69	53	31.18
30000- 1 Lakh	38	22.49	42	24.71
1-2 Lakhs	49	28.99	61	35.88
2-3 Lakhs	17	10.06	10	5.88

3-4 Lakhs	5	2.96	4	2.35
Assets Own :				
Radio	100	59.17	102	60.00
TV	127	75.15	137	80.59
Telephone	85	50.30	92	54.12
Cell Phone	130	76.92	141	82.94
Internet	28	16.57	60	35.29
Land	150	88.76	155	91.18
Own House	146	86.39	162	95.29
Pet Animals	60	35.50	52	30.59
Vehicles	38	22.49	51	30.00
Others	0	0	0	0

Table-3 Sources of Information used by the rural communities.

Information Sources and Tools	Raichur N=168	Percentage	Koppal N=170	Percentage
TV	135	80.36	160	94.12
Radio	99	58.93	126	74.12
Newspaper	60	35.71	98	57.65
CellPhone	128	76.19	145	85.29
Internet	19	11.31	36	21.18
Govt Officials	75	44.64	89	52.35
Extension Agents	38	22.62	54	31.76
School Teacher	67	39.88	43	25.29
Community leader	88	52.38	75	44.12
Library	31	18.45	25	14.71
Pamphlets/ broachers /Posters	69	41.07	87	51.18
Shops	112	66.67	109	64.12
Weekly Markets	47	27.98	72	42.35
Agriculture Fairs	20	11.90	38	22.35
Advertisements	63	37.50	51	30.00
Professional Experts	25	14.88	23	13.53
Experience Persons	45	26.79	32	18.82

The above table-3 shows that the majority of respondents use electronic sources of information e.g. TV (87.24%), Cell Phone (80.74%) and Radio (58.29%) use as major information sources in both Raichur and Koppal Districts but whereas the use of newspaper is only 35.71%. In addition, 74.12% of the farmers use rural shops to collect agriculture related information and information related to basic needs. Only 39.33% of the farmers use human sources of information in rural area e.g. community leader, school teacher and experienced persons etc. Hence, there is a need to increase the use of these human sources of information so that the information will spread easily and faster than the other media.

Table-4 shows that the agricultural information need of the rural communities and information channels used to fulfill the information needs in Koppal district. Majority of farmers use traditional information sources of Radio, TV and News Papers 58.33%, 70.83% and 51.79 respectively for different types of information in general, and more than

51.79% of rural communities use rural markets as media to obtain the information on price of Agriculture products. It was proved that 'Eamin and Roknuzzaman'(2012) shows the results of 62.5% News paper, 59.4% Radio and 53.1% TV are the major sources of getting information [5]. Majority of 71.43% Farmers are approaching Gram Panchayat officers to get the information about facilities or plans introduced by government for agriculture purpose. About 47.02% respondents are depending on rural shops where they can able to gather information easily related to seeds and fertilizers which are available in local market. Where as in Raichur district Table-5 Revealed that Majority of 38.10%, 54.76% and 39.05% respondents are getting information from commonly available information sources like Radio, TV and Newspapers, followed by 72.78% and 52.66% respondents are getting information related to Govt. Packages and Training Programs, pesticides, harvesting and seeds through the agriculture officers.

Print and Electronic Sources

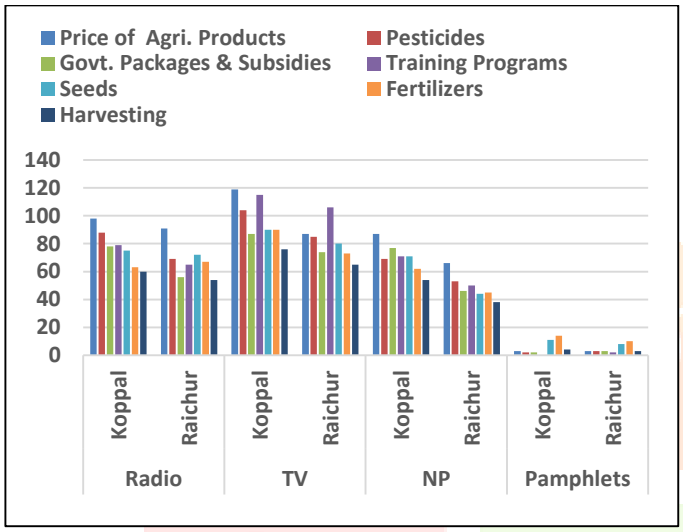

Figure-1

Farmers from Koppal district use electronic media than print sources (TV) to collect information price of agriculture products.

Farmers of both the districts similarly collect needed information from electronic media (TV) related to training programs of adoption of agriculture technology and use of pesticides.

Human Sources

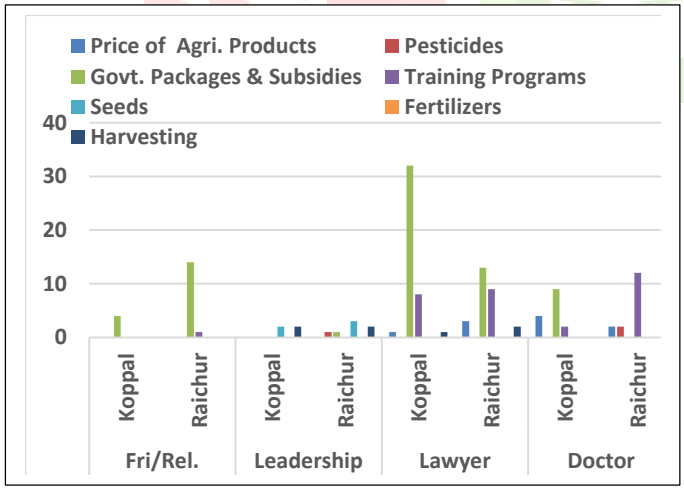

Figure-2

This figure shows that highest number of farmers use human sources (Lawyer) and Friends and Relatives to collect information about Government Packages and policies in Koppal and Raichur district.

In rural area farmers opined that they collect information about training program and use of pesticides from doctors and lawyers in Raichur district.

Institutional Sources

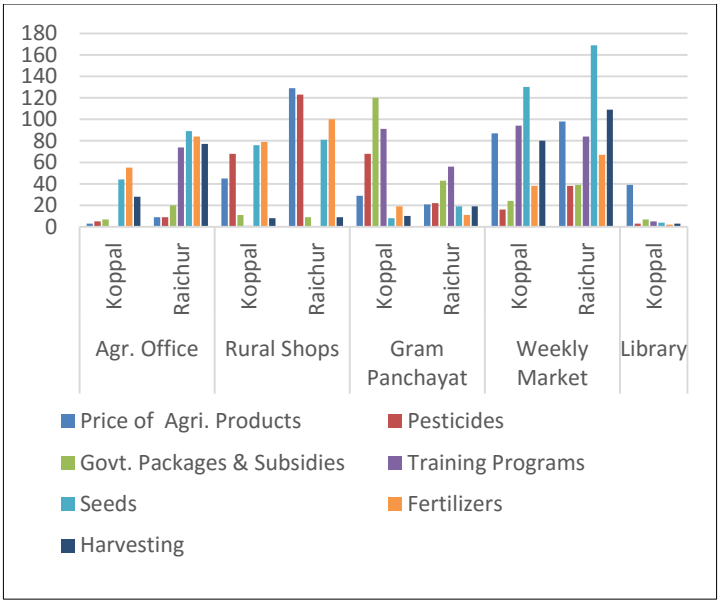

Fig-3 Sources of Information

Figure-3 highlights that more number of farmers of Raichur district visit to the rural weekly market to know the prices of agriculture produces to sell their product

Majority of the farmers visit rural shops to buy agriculture products and pesticides.

Agriculture information needs of Farmers of Koppal District and use of information sources

Print and Electronic

Types of Information	Radio	T.V.	NP	Pamphlets
Price of commodities	98 (58.33)	119 (70.83)	87 (51.79)	3 (1.79)
Pesticides	88 (52.38)	104 (61.90)	69 (41.07)	2 (1.19)
Govt. Packages & Subsidies	78 (46.43)	87 (51.79)	77 (45.07)	2 (1.19)
Training Programs	79 (47.02)	115 (68.45)	71 (42.26)	0 (0.00)
Seeds	75 (44.64)	90 (53.57)	71 (42.26)	11 (6.55)
Fertilizers	63 (37.50)	90 (53.57)	62 (36.90)	14 (8.33)
Harvesting	60 (35.71)	76 (45.24)	54 (32.14)	4 (2.38)

Human Sources of Information

Types of Information	Fri/Rel.	Community Leaders	Lawyer	Doctor	Agriculture Office
Price of commodities	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (0.60)	4 (2.38)	3 (1.79)
Pesticides	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	5 (2.98)
Govt. Packages & Subsidies	4 (2.38)	0 (0.00)	32 (19.05)	9	7 (4.17)
Training Programs	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	8 (4.76)	2 (1.19)	0 (0.00)
Seeds	0 (0.00)	2 (1.19)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	44 (26.19)
Fertilizers	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	55 (32.74)
Harvesting	0 (0.00)	2 (1.19)	1 (0.60)	0 (0.00)	28 (16.67)

Institutional Sources of Information

Types of Information	Rural Shops	Gram Panchayat	Rural Markets	Library
Price of commodities	45 (1.79)	29 (17.26)	87 (51.79)	39 (23.21)
Pesticides	68 (40.48)	68 (40.48)	16 (9.52)	3 (1.79)
Govt. Packages & Subsidies	11 (6.55)	120 (71.43)	24 (14.29)	7 (4.17)
Training Programs	1 (0.60)	91 (54.17)	94 (55.95)	5 (2.98)

Seeds	76 (45.24)	8 (4.76)	130 (77.38)	4 (2.38)
Fertilizers	79 (47.02)	19 (11.31)	38 (22.62)	2 (1.19)
Fertilizers	8 (4.76)	10 (5.95)	80 (47.62)	3 (1.79)
Harvesting	45 (1.79)	29 (17.26)	87 (51.79)	39 (23.21)

Agriculture information needs of Farmers of Raichur District and use of information sources

Print and Electronic

Types of Information	Radio	T.V.	NP	Pamphlets
Price Of commodities	91 (53.85)	87 (51.48)	66 (39.05)	3 (1.78)
Pesticides	69 (40.83)	85 (50.3)	53 (31.36)	3 (1.78)
Govt. Packages & Subsidies	56 (33.14)	74 (43.79)	46 (27.22)	3 (1.78)
Training Programs	65 (38.46)	106 (62.72)	50 (29.59)	2 (1.78)
Seeds	72 (42.6)	80 (47.34)	44 (26.04)	8 (4.73)
Fertilizers	67 (39.46)	73 (43.2)	45 (26.63)	10 (5.92)
Harvesting	54 (31.95)	65 (38.46)	38 (22.49)	3 (1.78)

Human Sources of Information

Types of Information	Fri/Rel.	Community Leaders	Lawyer	Doctor	Agriculture Office
Price Of commodities	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (1.78)	2 (1.18)	9 (5.33)
Pesticides	0 (0.00)	1 (0.59)	0 (0.00)	2 (1.18)	9 (5.33)
Govt. Packages & Subsidies	14 (8.28)	1 (0.59)	13 (7.69)	0 (0.00)	20 (11.83)
Training Programs	1 (0.59)	0 (0.00)	9 (5.33)	12 (7.1)	74 (43.79)
Seeds	0 (0.00)	3 (1.78)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	89 (52.66)
Fertilizers	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	84 (49.7)
Harvesting	0 (0.00)	2 (1.18)	2 (1.18)	0 (0.00)	77 (45.56)

Institutional Sources of Information

Types of Information	Rural Shops	Gram Panchayat	Rural Markets	Library
Price Of commodities	129 (76.33)	21 (12.43)	98 (57.99)	14 (8.28)
Pesticides	123 (72.78)	22 (13.02)	38 (22.49)	2 (1.18)
Govt. Packages & Subsidies	9 (5.33)	43 (25.44)	39 (23.08)	3 (1.78)
Training Programs	0 (0.00)	56 (33.14)	84 (49.7)	9 (5.33)
Seeds	81 (47.93)	19 (33.14)	169 (100)	7 (4.14)
Fertilizers	100 (59.17)	11 (6.51)	67 (39.64)	12 (7.1)
Harvesting	9 (5.33)	19 (11.24)	109 (64.5)	3 (1.78)

Conclusion :

The present study suggests that the farmers of backward region of Hyderabad Karnataka required various types of information for agriculture purpose and for general information for their day to day life. As the results shows that majority of respondents use only TV, Radio and newspaper in both the districts. But there are other sources which gives information for agriculture than the traditional information sources. Only 3.57% respondents are using community leader as information sources, Only 11.90% are getting advice from agriculture officers. Many agricultural programs introduced by the government for agriculture purpose through Gram Panchayat. But only 33.14% are able

to get information from panchayat office. Due to the illiteracy, technological problems, lack of awareness and inadequate of transportation facility, farmers are not able to get required information properly. Suggested below steps to improve the information literacy among the rural community.

- User education increases competency level among the rural communities.
- Department of agriculture government of Karnataka needs create awareness about training programs conducting for farmers in different places e.g. raitamitra.
- As TV, Radio and Newspaper are the common sources of information, there should a program TV or Radio or column in a newspaper about the places where training programs are conducted.
- There is a need for awareness program to be conducted by the Gram Panchayat level, it helps farmer to know about the technologies, market rates, new government plans introduced, etc.

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