

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF THE LIVESTOCK FARMERS IN BANDA DISTRICT OF UTTAR PRADESH

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Abstract

Information seeking is a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or a gap in knowledge. Information seeking behaviour encompasses information behaviour as well as the totality of unintended or passive behaviour as well as purposive behaviour that do not involve seeking, such as avoiding information. Farmers use different information sources and channels for seeking information on improved agricultural and livestock practices. This paper identifies what are the different sources used by the livestock farmers to get the information related to livestock production. The study was conducted in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh. A Random Proportionate Sampling (RPS) method was used to select the sample households. The selected respondents were interviewed personally with the help of a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule. Study revealed the socio economic characteristics of respondents that majority (53.5 %) of the respondents belonged to middle (35-50 years) age group, majority (65.5 %) of respondents were illiterate, nearly 80.00 per cent of respondents were marginal (32.0 %) to small (55.5 %) farmers, majority of respondents were resource poor (52.2 %), respondents having non-descript animals were very high (62.0%). Study regarding localite sources of information seeking reveals that majority of the respondents (48.0%) were contacting frequently to neighbours, occasionally (23.0%) respondents were contacting Progressive farmers for livestock related information while Cosmopolite sources of information are mainly Private Veterinary Service Providers (PVSP) and Veterinary Officers. The mass media sources frequently utilizing by the farmers are newspaper, television and mobile.

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Introduction

Animal husbandry is the backbone of rural economy and plays an important role in the livelihood security of poor people of rain-fed agro-ecosystem in particular, because of inherent risk involved in the crop farming due to uneven rainfall and occurrence of droughts (Misra, 2005). In India, income from livestock production accounts for 15-40 % of total farm household earnings (World Bank, 1999). The Indian farmers generally do mixed farming system i.e. a combination of crop and livestock where the output of one enterprise becomes the input of another enterprise thereby realize the resource efficiency. The farmers are getting different kinds of products from animal husbandry such as milk, meat and eggs are an important source of animal protein to the members of the farmer's family. The farmers which are not having agriculture land, have the better opportunities in animal husbandry in comparison to other sources of income. Animal husbandry also plays the crucial role in securing the livelihood during the time of natural calamities such as drought and flood. Livestock farming practices in India is still on traditional lines. The lack of awareness about scientific practices is a major hurdle to improve the productivity of farm animals. Despite various channels of government, private and NGOs are dedicated to the spread of information and timely availability of information is a major concern. The current study focusses on what are different sources of information used by the livestock farmers to obtain timely and vital information regarding animal husbandry practices.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh. Twenty villages namely Rampur, Galauli,, Sabada, Shekhupura, Mahabara, Sikahula, Gadariya, Amara, Kurauli, Ujretha, Lohara, Jalalpur, Shahpur, Mantha, Kumedha, Poon, Kayal, Simauni and Bagetha were selected randomly from district for the study. From each village ten framers were selected randomly. The list of livestock farmers was prepared from the selected villages. After that, from each village 10 livestock farmers were selected on the basis of Random Proportionate Sampling (RPS) procedure. Thus, in the study total sample size was of 20 villages and 200 livestock farmers as respondents (n=200). The selected respondents were interviewed personally with the help of a well structured and pre-tested interview schedule.

Results and Discussion

Socio economic profile of the farmers

A profile of socio economic condition of the respondents were analyzed and presented in table 1. The table shows that most of the respondents (53.5 %) belonged to middle age group followed by old age (27.7 %) and young age (19.5 %)

group. The frequency distribution was highly skewed towards the older respondents. This shows that the new generation is less interested in livestock farming. Regarding educational status of the respondents, results revealed that majority (65.5 %) of respondents were illiterate followed by educated up to middle class level (28.5 %), high school level (5.0 %) whereas Graduate and above educated was only (1.0%). The low education level of the livestock farmers may be adversely influence adoption of new technologies in livestock production system. Results on land holding shows that nearly 80.00 per cent of respondents were marginal (32.0 %) to small (55.5 %) farmers couples with majority of respondents were resource poor (52.2 %).

The study also shows that the most of the respondents (62.0%) were having non-descript animals whereas only 22.0 per cent of respondents had cross breed animals. Consequently the milk production of majority (51.5 %) of the respondents fell under low category whereas majority (37.5 %) of the respondents belonged to medium milk production category. Similar findings were also reported by Dhaka et al., (2017).

Table.1 Distribution of the respondents on the basis of Socio economic profile
(n=200)

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age (in years)	Young (<30)	39	19.5
	Middle (31-50)	107	53.5
	Old (>50)	54	27.0
Education	Illiterate	131	65.5
	Functional literate (up to middle class)	57	28.5
	High school	10	5.0
	Graduate and above	2	1.0
Land Holdings	Marginal	64	32.0
	Small	111	55.5
	Medium	21	10.5
	Large	4	2.0
Resourcefulness	Rich	37	18.5
	Medium	59	29.5
	Poor	104	52.0
Herd composition	Non-descript breed	124	62.0
	Improved breed	44	22.0
	Both	34	16.0
Milk production	Low	103	51.5
	Medium	75	37.5
	High	22	11.0

Information seeking behaviour of the livestock farmers

Localite sources of information:

Data presented in the Table. 2 shows that most of the respondents (48.0%) were contacting frequently to neighbours followed by 25.0 percent progressive farmers, (20.0%) family members and (18.5%) contacting friends respectively and occasionally (23.0%) respondents were contacting Progressive farmers followed by 12.0 percent to neighbours, 11.5 percent to family members and 8.5 percent to friends and 6.0 percent respondents rarely contacted to Progressive farmers followed by friends (4.0%), family members (3.0 %) and neighbours (2.0%) for livestock related information while 69 percent famers never contacted to friends, (65%) to family members, (46%) to progressive farmers and (38%) to neighbours respectively for livestock related information. Similar results were also reported by Verma et al., (2012).

Table.2 Distribution of respondents on the basis of information seeking through localite sources

Source	Frequency of utilization (n=200)			
	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Family member	41 (20.5)	23 (11.5)	6 (3.0)	130 (65.0)
Neighbours	98 (48.0)	24 (12.0)	4 (2.0)	76 (38.0)
Friends	37 (18.5)	17 (8.5)	8 (4.0)	138 (69.0)
Progressive farmers	50 (25.0)	46 (23.0)	12 (6.0)	92 (46.0)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Cosmopolite sources of information:

Table.3 shows that majority of the respondents (14.5%) were contacting frequently to Private Veterinary Service Providers (PVSP) followed by 15.0 percent to Veterinary Officers (V.O), 8.0 percent to BAIF personals and 7.0 percent to paravets respectively and occasionally (19.0%) respondents were contacting PVSP followed by 13.0 percent to V.O, 5.0 percent to BAIF personals, equal number of farmers (3.0%) were contacted to bank officials and paravets respectively and rarely 6.0 percent respondents contacted to V.O, 5.0 percent to PVSP, 4.0 percent to paravets and 2.0 percent to BAIF personals for livestock related information while 97 percent famers never contacted to Bank officials, (86%) to BAIF personals, (85%) to paravets, (66%) to V.O and (61%) to PVSP respectively for livestock related information. Similar observations were also reported by Verma et al., (2012).

Table.3 Distribution of respondents on the basis of information seeking through cosmopolite source

Source Source	Frequency of utilization (n=200)			
	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Private V.S. provider	29 (14.5)	39 (19.5)	10 (5.0)	122 (61.0)
V.O.	30 (15.0)	26 (13.0)	12 (6.0)	132 (66.0)
Para vet	14 (7.0)	6 (3.0)	8 (4.0)	172 (86.0)
BAIF	16 (8.0)	10 (5.0)	4 (2.0)	170 (85.0)
Bank officials	-	6 (3.0)	-	194 (97.0)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Mass media exposure

Table.4 reveals that 19 percent respondents were frequently utilizing newspaper followed by 18.0 and 14.0 percent respondents using Television and mobile as the source of information related to livestock farming while 12.0 percent, 8.0 percent and 2.0 percent farmers were getting information from Radio, magazine and Internet respectively. Occasionally, 20.0%, 14.0%, 7.0%, 6.0%, 5.0% and 4.0 percent farmers were using radio, newspaper, Television, magazine, mobile and Internet respectively for livestock related information. While 17.0%, 9.0%, 9.0%, 6.0%, 5.0% and 4.0 % of the selected farmers were rarely getting information from radio, internet, mobile, newspaper, TV and magazine respectively. Similar findings were also reported by Verma et al., (2012).

Table. 4 Distribution of respondents on the basis of information seeking through mass media sources

Source Source	Frequency of utilization (n=200)			
	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Radio	24 (12.0)	24 (20.0)	34 (17.0)	102 (51.0)
Television	36 (18.0)	14 (7.0)	10 (5.0)	140 (70.0)
Newspaper	38 (19.0)	28 (14.0)	12 (6.0)	122 (61.0)
Magazine	16 (8.0)	12 (6.0)	8 (4.0)	164 (82.0)
Mobile	28 (14.0)	10 (5.0)	18 (9.0)	144 (72.0)
Internet	4 (2.0)	8 (4.0)	18 (9.0)	170 (85.0)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

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