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ROLE OF AGRICULTURAL PUBLICATIONS IN DISSEMINATING AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION AMONG FARMING COMMUNITY OF DISTRICT FAISALABAD

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Agricultural publications are considered effective tool to disseminate agricultural information among the farming community. In Pakistan, various public and private organizations used this tool in order to catalyze the agricultural innovation and diffusion process. The present study addressed the question of contribution and role of agricultural publications in dissemination agri. information among farmers. The universe of the study was district Faisalabad. A sample size of 52 subscribers of five selected agricultural publications was drawn from the study area. A pre-tested and validated mail-questionnaire was used for data collection. The data thus collected were analyzed through computer software SPSS. The result of the study reveals that the response of young farmers was in favor of agricultural publications as compared to old farmers regarding usefulness in crop productivity, information authenticity, and practicability of information. It is suggested that subscription of the agri. publications should be increased for maximum coverage of farming community.
Keywords: Agriculture Publications, dissemination of agri. Information, farming community

INTRODUCTION

The media is considered as significant mean to transfer modern agricultural technologies to literate and illiterate farmers alike. In Pakistan farm and home broadcast with agricultural thrust were introduced in 1966, to enlighten farmers on the use of various technologies to boost agricultural development. At present, there are about 50 such radio units all over the country. With the main stream of Pakistani population engaged actively in agriculture, media could serve as a suitable medium of dissemination of farm information and latest technical development (Malik, 2000) as the farmers can easily understand the operations, technology and instruction through media.

Among the mass media, newspaper and farm magazine are commonly used. They have a vital role to play in the communication of agricultural information among the literate farmers. Increasing rate of literacy in the country offers new promises and prospects for utilizing print media as a means of communication. The print media widened the scope of communication (Mohsin, 1997). It is cheap and people can afford to buy and read them at their convenience. It is a permanent medium as the messages are imprinted permanently with high storage value which makes them suitable for reference and research. Agricultural journalism is of recent origin in Pakistan (Muhammad, 2005). It came into existence just five decades ago. It is now gaining importance, particularly after the establishment of agricultural university in Faisalabad (Cheema, 2000).

In the view of increased literacy level, print media in the form of agricultural publications, has acquired a greater role in dissemination of information on improved agricultural practices to the farming community. Pakistan has farm magazines in every province, published mostly in local and national languages. A majority of the farmers in the Punjab is poor; their poverty emanates from their inability to get the latest and timely information. Understandably, information-poverty leads to resource-deprivation and marginalization (Ashraf, 2008). Reported that 40% of the farmers used print media in the form of agriculture publications was to get agricultural information. Therefore, print media can play a vital role to inform farmers about diseases and pest control and other agriculture related information (Abbas *et al*., 2003; Muhammad, 2005). Farmers can also get the appropriate advices of experts through these media to cope with the emerging problems by mailing their problems and questions to the editors. Print media has the capacity to cope with the coming agricultural problems and to lend them a hand for the solution of their problems. There is increasing trend of publishing agricultural magazines in the Punjab for farming community. In the present study an effort has been made to investigate the role of print media in dissemination of agricultural information in district Faisalabad.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study aimed at analyzing the role of Agricultural publications on farm productivity through dissemination of agricultural information District Faisalabad. The study district comprises five tehsils namely Faisalabad, Chak Jhumra, Samundri, Tandlianwala, and Jaranwala. The cross sectional research design was used for the study. The subscribes of five agricultural publications i.e. Zirrat Nama, Kissan Time, Kissan Risala, Nidia-i-Kissan and Zaria digest. DOA. (2009) .These only five publications published in this regard were served as target population of the study. The lists of the subscribers were obtained and a sample of 52 respondents was drawn by using simple random sampling technique. A pre-tested and validated mail-questionnaire was used for data collection. The mail-questionnaires were sent at the home address of the respondents with the request to fill and return back to the researcher. Simple frequency and percentages were calculated to interpret the results. The cross tabulation was also applied for further interpretation of the results.

Selection of study area : Although, Faisalabad is an industrial city of Pakistan and called as Manchester of Pakistan, its historical background rank ties hub of cotton, sugarcane and wheat production territory. Now although this territory have been transformed from agricultural economy to industrialization, but still the major fraction of population of this district practice farming; no doubt on account of rapid mechanization of industry have polluted underground water and rendered the soil barren and unproductive . A number of factors were taken into consideration while selecting this district as research area.

First of all, this area consists of mixed population in terms of socio-ethnic characteristics. Secondly, Faisalabad (formally called Lyallpur) is characterized by land holding diversification (Ahmad, 1997). Thirdly, this district is moderately exposed to modernization due to its geographical location medium distance from regulative institutions and remote areas (Cheema, 2000). Fourthly, Faisalabad is multi-cropping area with diversified livestock (DOA, 2008). Fifthly, the farming community is moderately educated (Iqbal, 1984). Sixthly, this district is in the process of change from a traditional agro-based economy to agro urbanized economy (Majeed, 1994). Lastly but the least, have been serving there in university of Agriculture Faisalabad and because had a good exposure to the area and facilitating environment and means for the collection of equity data.

Research Population : As this study focused on the impact of agricultural publications and agricultural productivity, only the readers literate farmers can effectively benefit from agricultural publications; thus all the readers literate farmers of district Faisalabad .The selected district were considered as research population; where as the major fraction of illiterate farmers were left without any benefit from agricultural publications. This is one of the limitations of Agriculture publication, which is reflected here in the form of impact assessment of agricultural publications on farm productivity (Saeed, 1993).

Data Collection : In order to have the representation of the entire population, fifty two literate farmers were selected on the bases available sample fifty tow respondent. The survey method techniques were used to collect date separately to ensure un-biased and uninfluenced responses. A brief account of the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents before survey. It removed the suspicion or doubt, if any in the mind of respondent, thus helped in recording real responses (Wimmer and Dominick, 2003)**.**

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The role of Agriculture publications largely depend upon the adoption of innovation by the farmers. After inventing some tool of agriculture, the second phase is to make it possible for the farmer to utilize it in a proper way.

For this purpose, diffusion of innovation is a very time consuming process. In this process the social circumstances of the community, their beliefs, and their economic conditions are particularly important in the adoption of innovation.

Agricultural publications play a very pivotal role in the diffusion of innovation. These publications help to change the primitive agricultural methods in the land forming.

It is a very typical phenomenon that links and establishes the relationship between publications and the diffusion of the aims of these publications

The basic aim of these agro-based publications is to give a new idea, to educate the farmer. So in this regard the research of the scientists is published in these publications to give a new vision a new method for the farming of the crops and animal tending.

There are so many change agents that wish to speed up the process by which innovations are adopted. One method for doing so is to communicate information about new ideas more rapidly or more adequately so that knowledge is created at an earlier date.

In this regard agricultural publications motivate the potential adopters to adopt that innovation

The data presented in Table 1 indicates that the respondents between the age of 18-25 years shows that 11 respondent out of 52 had a point of view that their yield had increased by the use of Agri. information. Similarly, 7 respondents belong to age category of 26-35 years show that their yield had increased by the use of agri. publications. It indicates that the response of the respondents between the age of 18-25 was high and the respondents belong to category 36-45 was low in term of usefulness of agri. information from the publications. The table indicates that youngster had more use of agriculture publication. These results are in line with the

Table 1. Cross tabulation of age of respondent with their improved yield by using agri. publications

		Improve yield by using Agri. Publications				Total
		Yes	No	To some extent	undecided	
Age of the Respondent	18-25	11	2	1	2	16
	26-35	7	2	1	2	12
	36-45	3	3	0	1	7
	46 and above	6	6	3	2	17
Total		27	13	5	7	52

Table 2. Cross tabulation of age of respondent with the practicability of Information got from agricultural publications.

		Practicability of information from Agri. publication				Total
		Yes	No	To some extent	Undecided	
Age of the Respondent	10	2	2	2	2	16
	4	1	3	4	2	12
	3	3	1	0	1	7
	9	1	5	2	2	17
Total		26	7	11	8	52

Table 3. Cross tabulation age of respondent with the authenticity of information provided by agriculture publication

		Authenticity of information provided by Agri. Publication				Total
		Yes	No	To some extent	Undecided	
Age of the Respondent	18-25	11	1	4	0	16
	26-35	7	1	2	2	12
	36-45	2	2	2	1	7
	46 and above	6	5	3	3	17
Total		26	9	11	6	52

findings of Muhammad *et a*l. (2008), Iqbal (1984) and Majeed (1994) that young farmers were more educated and inclined to innovative technology as compared to old farmers.

Table 2 indicates that 10 and 9 respondents belong to age category of 18-25 and 46 & above show that agricultural information provided by agri. publications was practicable in actual farm conditions respectively. But only 4 and 3 respondents of age categories 26-35 and 36-45 had a view that information was practicable respectively. It indicates that young farmers had positive view about the publications. These results are in accordance with the findings of Saeed (1993) and Wimmer and Dominik (2003) that young farmers had more positive perception about the practicability of the agricultural information about agricultural publications as compared to old farmers.

Table 3 indicates that 11 respondents belong to age category of 18-25 years had a view that the information provided to them by agri. publication was authentic. But only 2 respondents of age category of 36-45 believed that the information was authentic. It again indicates that the perception of young farmers was more positive as compared to old one. These results are in accordance with the findings of Ashraf (2008), Asghar (1990) that young farmers have positive perception about authenticity of information provided by agriculture publication as compared to old one.

Figure 1 shows total values of the three tables in the form of the frequency .The young farmers are more innovators and their adoption level is high. It is because of awareness about Technological farming.

CONCLUSION

It may be concluded from the research that as a whole there is a need to improve the standards of the agricultural publications in the context of the practicability of the recommendations in the articles. Moreover, the articles should meet the requirements of diversified farming community .There is also a need to enhance the circulation among the farmers of all ranks. It can be concluded that the response of young farmers regarding usefulness, practicability and authenticity of information provided by agricultural publications was more positive as compared to old farmers. So, the young farmers should be the focus and target beneficiaries of the agencies publishing content regarding agricultural technologies.

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