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A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PESTICIDE AGENCIES IN THE DIFFUSION OF RECOMMENDED PLANT PROTECTION PRACTICES IN TOBA TEK SINGH

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This study was undertaken to determine the effectiveness of pesticide agencies in the diffusion of recommended plant protection practices in five randomly selected villages of Toba Tek Singh Tehsil, and the data were collected from 150 randomly selected respondents. The analysis of data led to the conclusion that the role of insecticide/pesticide agencies in the identification of nature of attack and provision of required guidance has been insignificant. These agencies utilized radio and television as the most important media for the diffusion of information and popularizing their products.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture occupies a conspicuous place in the national economy of Pakistan. A number of factors including soil fertility, availability of irrigation water, improved seed varieties, intercultural practices and plant protection measures etc. affect the production factors; plant protection, probably is the most important factor. The main objective of this study was to determine the effectiveness of pesticide agencies in the diffusion of information regarding the recommended plant protection practices.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Keeping in view the importance of area, Toba Tek Singh Tehsil was selected as the universe for the study. The study

was limited to five randomly selected villages out of 180 villages of the Tehsil. From each village, 30 farmers were selected randomly and thus the total number of respondents was 150. The data collected with the help of an interview schedule were analysed to draw conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Majority of the respondents i.e. 72 % came to know the nature of attack on different crops through their friends, whereas 24.66 and 23.33% respondents were helped by Agri. Department and dealers respectively. The percentage of respondents getting information from agency workers was only 4.66. Ali (1971) reported that the distance from the source of information affected the adoption of plant protection measures.

Table 1. *Source of information regarding the identification of the nature of attack*

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
Agri. Department	37	24.66
Agency workers	7	4.66
Dealers	35	23.33
Friends	108	72.00
Total	187	124.68

Majority of the 92% respondents adopted chemical control measures against the attack of insects/pests and diseases, whereas the remaining 8% did not adopt this practice.

Khan (1972) observed that all the respondents in his study used the recommended plant protection measures regularly against wheat crop diseases and insects like Root Rot, Loose Smut, Yellow Rust and Cotworm. He reported that friends were the most important source of information regarding the use of chemicals as pointed out by 70% of the respondents. According to 37.33% of the respondents they had benefitted from mass media for getting the needed information. Of the

remaining respondents, 27.33% got the required information from Agriculture Department. Private agencies provided information to only 10 % of the respondents.

Table 2. *Source of information regarding the use of chemicals*

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
Agri. Department	41	27.33
Private agencies	15	10.10
Mass media	56	37.33
Friends	105	70.00

Table 3. *Extension methods applied by the agencies for providing information to the farmers*

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
Contact by field staff	13	8.66
Printed material	60	40.00
Demonstration	53	35.33
Television	68	45.33
Radio	103	68.66

The private agencies disseminated information through radio as reported by 68.66% of the respondents. According to 45.33% of the respondents, these agencies used television as the extension method. As reported by 35.33 and 8.66% of the respondents, respectively, demonstration and contact methods were also used. According to 40 %, these agencies used printed material for the purpose. Shakir (1982) revealed that extension methods like field demonstration, farm and home visits and group meetings were categorised by the majority of respondents as very effective means for the purpose.

Table 4. *Awareness of the functions of insecticide/pesticide agencies*

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
Selling their products	95	63.34
Imparting Agri. information	15	10.00
Selling products and providing information	40	26.66
Total	150	100.00

According to 63.34% of the respondents, insecticide/pesticide agencies were interested in selling their commodities, whereas 26.66% of the respondents thought that they performed both the functions i.e. selling their products and providing information. However, 10% respondents said that these agencies imparted agricultural information only.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

As a source of providing information to the farmers regarding the identification of the nature of pest attack, the role of agency workers was reported to be minimum i.e. 4.66%. The private agencies provided guidance regarding the use of chemicals to only 10% of the respondents. Over 63% respondents were of the view that the agencies were more interested in selling their products, whereas only 10% respondents recognized their role in imparting agricultural information.

The supply of plant protection equipment and materials to the farmers on subsidized rates, undoubtedly, would provide an incentive to the growers of cotton and other crops for the optimum use of recommended insecticides. Agency workers may be properly guided by their supervisors to deal with the farmers in a cooperative and friendly manner in order to acquaint

farmers with the proper use of different insecticides. It is also suggested that agency workers should make efforts to train the farmers regarding the use of chemicals for control of insects/ pests and diseases. This will make the task of pest control easier and more economical for the farmer.

The agencies should cover additional areas by employing more workers and should have close contact with the farmers.

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