

SOURCES AND EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING INFORMATION MEDIA FOR FARM PRODUCTS

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The sample for present study comprised of 36 farmers holding different farm sizes. The commodities chosen were wheat, maize and sugarcane. Twenty-four; each of commission agents, wholesalers and retailers were taken. The farmer respondents were found unsatisfied with the existing system and demanded drastic improvement. Analysis revealed that majority of the farmers depended on fellow farmers or personal visits to the market for obtaining information, while the market intermediaries (commission agents and wholesalers) mainly used telephone for obtaining market information. Hopefully, the findings of this study will provide guidelines to policy makers in designing information dissemination programs.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing plays a strategic role in accelerating the pace of agricultural growth. Market information is one of the important functions which ensures the smooth and efficient operation of the marketing system. Accurate, adequate and timely availability of market information facilitates farmers to take decision about when and where to sell products. Everyone engaged in production, and in the buying and selling of products is continually in need of market information. This is more true in case of agricultural products as their prices fluctuate more widely than those of the other products. Market information is also essential for the government for the smooth conduct of a marketing business and for safeguarding the interest of the groups engaged in the marketing process.

The timely provision of adequate and correct information thus become imperative. The media of market information attains much more importance in the present day

rapidly changing conditions in which agricultural markets operate. This paper primarily pertains to identifying the effectiveness of information media in the provision of desired information to the marketing participants.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Faisalabad district, as it fairly represents the conditions prevailing in the irrigated areas of the province. The data regarding wheat, maize and sugarcane produced in the sample area were collected from thirty-six farmers selected from two villages located at different distances from the town market. The sample farmers represent the three farm holding categories. Besides farmers, twenty-four; each of commission agents, wholesalers and retailers were taken from the Faisalabad market dealing in all the three sample commodities. However, their volume of business varied in each commodity. The data pertain to the year, 1989-90.

Table 1. Sources of marketing information for sample farmers

Media	Small farmers		Medium farmers		Large farmers		All farmers	
	(<12.5 acres)		(25 acres)		(>25 acres)			
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Fellow farmers	11	91.66	9	75	-	-	20	55.55
Visit to market	1	8.34	3	25	7	58.33	11	30.55
Radio	-	-	-	-	4	33.34	4	11.11
Newspapers	-	-	-	-	1	8.33	1	2.27

Table 2. Reasons of low prices of farm products on sample farms

Reasons of low prices	Small farmers		Medium farmers		Large farmers		All farmers	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Lack of grading	-	-	-	-	1	8.34	1	2.27
Inefficiency of mass media	-	-	1	8.33	6	50.00	7	19.44
Lack of bargaining power	12	100	11	91.67	5	41.66	28	77.77
Total	12	100	12	100	12	100	36	100

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of data (Table 1) revealed that 91.7 and 75% of small and medium farmers respectively received information from the fellow farmers. However, 8.3% of the small, 25% of the medium and 58.3% of the large farmers obtained information by personal visits to the markets. Radio and Newspapers provided information to 33.3% of the large farmers alone (Table 1). The small farmers due to low surplus, inaccessibility to markets and lack of resources

depended mainly on the fellow farmers/market intermediaries for information and were unable to avail any benefit from the quicker and modern means of mass media. The large farmers on the other hand, had gathered information by personal visits to the markets and through radio and newspapers. The smaller farmers having low saleable products worried less about the market information as compared with the bigger farmers who had more saleable products and were subjected more to price risks. As regards low product prices, the

analysis indicated that weak bargaining power (77.8%), inefficiency of mass media (19.4%) and lack of grading (2.3%) were responsible for low agricultural product's prices (Table 2).

ducts were the other causes faced by the farmers in obtaining the correct and timely information (Table 3).

The analysis further revealed that the market intermediaries such as commission

Table 3. Problems faced by sample farmers in getting marketing information

Farm size	Small farmers		Medium farmers		Large farmers		All farmers	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Inaccessibility to the market	11	91.66	8	66.66	-	-	19	52.77
Non-cooperation of market committee staff	1	8.34	4	33.34	7	58.34	12	33.33
Others	-	-	-	-	5	41.66	5	13.88
Total	12	100	12	100	12	100	36	100

Table 4. Sources of market information for commission agents, wholesalers and retailers

Source of information	Commission agent		Wholesaler		Retailer	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Telephone	22	91.66	20	83.34	-	-
Radio	2	8.34	-	-	-	-
Newspapers	-	-	-	-	1	8.34
Market committee	-	-	-	-	-	-
Personal visit to market	-	-	4	16.66	11	91.66
Total	24	100	24	100	12	100

The problems in getting the information included; inaccessibility to markets due to long distance, inefficiency of mass media, non-cooperation of the market committee staff and paucity of useful information. Besides these, lack of education among the farmers and small amounts of saleable pro-

agents and wholesalers depended on the telephone for market information to the extent of 91.77 and 83.3%, respectively. Next was their visits to markets; the extent in wholesalers was 16.7% and in retailers 91.7 % (Table 4). The means of mass media were not used by the respondents, which

may be due to their unreliability or inefficiency.

Farmers on the other hand, be properly educated and trained to develop capabilities

Table 5. Effectiveness of existing information system for market intermediaries and farmers

Respondents satisfaction	Market intermediaries		Farmers	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Satisfied	22	91.66	-	-
Not satisfied	2	8.34	36	100
Total	24	100	36	100

It is interesting to note that all the market intermediaries like commission agents, wholesalers and retailers were fully satisfied with the existing market information arrangements as against none from the farmers (Table 5) who all were unsatisfied and demanded drastic improvement in the system.

To conclude the existing means of mass media as the source of market information for the farmers were found ineffective in the provision of timely, reliable and adequate information. The farmers mainly relied on fellow farmers and personnel visits to the markets for information. The market intermediaries mainly used telephone for obtaining market information.

The market information system needs to be overhauled in order to enhance the roll of mass media for the provision of timely and useful information to the farmers and market intermediaries. The Directorate of Economics and Marketing be facilitated and made responsible to achieve this end through the use of mass media and computer service.

of gathering and making use of available market information. Although the marketing cooperatives are non-existent inactive in many areas, still the formal marketing cooperation or informal cooperation in the sale of farm produce and purchase of farm inputs at beneficial prices is one of the feasible solution, especially for small farmers.

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