# A STUDY ON INFORMATION SOURCES UTILISATION BEHAVIOUR OF TAPIOCA GROWERS IN SALEM DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU, INDIA

**V. Sakthivel[1]\* and M. Manoharan[2]**

[1*]Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Extension, Faculty of Agriculture,
Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar-608002 (Tamil Nadu) India.
[2]Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu), India.

## Abstract

Tapioca is grown as an annual crop in subtropical and tropical regions of the world. Although tapioca is cultivated in India in 10 States, major production is from the Southern States like Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Tamil Nadu ranks first in area, production and productivity of tapioca in India. In Tamil Nadu 60 Per cent of tapioca produced is utilized industrially to produce starch, sago and other value added products. The interpersonal as well as mass communication channels helped the farmers to upto date their knowledge regarding agricultural development and other related activities. It ensures timely delivery of relevant information to support tapioca growers. Hence this study was taken up in the tapioca predominant district of Salem in Tamil Nadu State in order to know the information sources utilisation behaviour of tapioca growers with a sample size of one hundred and twenty respondents. The respondents were selected based on random sampling method. This study revealed that majority of the tapioca growers considered the Assistant Agricultural Officers and Agriculture Officers as their preferred institutional sources of information. Their major non-institutional sources used were friends, relatives, progressive farmers and neighbours. Radio was the popular media to tapioca growers for receiving farm information closely followed by television and newspaper.

*Key words:* Information sources utilisation, Tapioca growers.

## Introduction

Tapioca (*Manihot esculenta crantz*) is considered as one of the important and king of tropical tuber crops. It occupies a significant position in the global agricultural economy and trade amongst the tuber crops (Edison *et al.*, 2006). It is native place of South America and is a basic food for millions of people around the world (Vigneshwara Varmudy, 2014). It is a rich source of carbohydrate, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin C and calcium. Tapioca as a food security crop, can be left in ground without harvesting for some time, makes it a very useful crop as a security against famine (Srikanth, 2018). Global production of tapioca in 2018 was 278 million tonnes with Nigeria as the world's largest producer, having 21% of the world total and other major growers of tapioca in the world were Thailand and Democratic Republic of the Congo (FAOSTAT, 2019). In India, tapioca is cultivated in an area of 0.173 million hectares producing 4.95 million tonnes with a productivity of 28. 64 t / ha. Tamil Nadu is highest area 0.089 million hectares for tapioca cultivation and producing 2.86 million tonnes with a productivity of 31.94 t / ha in India (Horticulture Statistics at a Glance, 2018). There are more than 1000 sago and starch industries in Tamil Nadu. Out of which 800 of them are concentrated in and around Salem district.

Farmers in general seek information from many sources regarding improved agricultural practices. There are numerous sources, both interpersonal and mass media, localite and cosmopolite that are available to the farmers in the event of any need for information while non-institutional sources like family members, friends, local leaders and input dealers are among the members of farming system, the personal cosmopolite sources like extension personnel, change agents, etc from outside system. Mass media sources are also available to them (Kannan, 2002).

Bembridge, (1986) emphasized that the link between

*\*Author for correspondence :* E-mail: sakthivelvaradarajan@yahoo.co.in

**Table 1:** Mean score according to respondents level of information sources utilization.

| Sl. No | Sources | Mean score | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Marginal farmers n=40 | Small farmers n=40 | Big farmers n=40 | Over all mean score n = 120 |
| **I** | **Institutional sources** | | | | |
| 1 | AAO | 2.33 | 2.88 | 2.90 | 2.70 |
| 2 | AO | 2.25 | 2.60 | 2.83 | 2.56 |
| 3 | ADO | 1.30 | 1.90 | 2.23 | 1.81 |
| 4 | ADA | 1.28 | 1.63 | 1.93 | 1.61 |
| 5 | JDA | 1.00 | 1.03 | 1.18 | 1.07 |
| 6 | Professor / scientists | 1.13 | 1.55 | 1.63 | 1.44 |
| | **Mean** | **1.55** | **1.93** | **2.12** | **1.87** |
| **II** | **Non-institutional sources** | | | | |
| 1 | Agricultural leaders | 2.15 | 2.05 | 2.18 | 2.13 |
| 2 | FDG convenors | 2.33 | 2.33 | 2.48 | 2.38 |
| 3 | Progressive farmers | 2.55 | 2.48 | 2.85 | 2.63 |
| 4 | Friends | 3.00 | 2.83 | 3.60 | 3.14 |
| 5 | Relatives | 2.88 | 2.68 | 2.93 | 2.83 |
| 6 | Fertilizer dealers | 1.90 | 1.80 | 1.93 | 1.88 |
| 7 | Neighbours | 2.50 | 2.45 | 2.75 | 2.57 |
| | **Mean** | **2.47** | **2.37** | **2.67** | **2.50** |
| **III** | **Media sources** | | | | |
| 1 | Posters | 1.28 | 1.33 | 1.48 | 1.36 |
| 2 | Charts | 1.05 | 1.10 | 1.43 | 1.19 |
| 3 | Extension literature | 1.50 | 1.90 | 2.18 | 1.86 |
| 4 | Hoardings | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| 5 | Wall paintings | 1.30 | 1.35 | 1.60 | 1.42 |
| 6 | News paper | 1.80 | 2.73 | 2.90 | 2.48 |
| 7 | Radio | 2.40 | 2.93 | 2.95 | 2.76 |
| 8 | Trial plots | 1.35 | 1.38 | 2.05 | 1.59 |
| 9 | Agricultural meetings | 1.50 | 1.60 | 2.08 | 1.73 |
| 10 | Demonstrations | 1.60 | 1.63 | 1.95 | 1.73 |
| 11 | Tour | 1.10 | 1.23 | 1.43 | 1.25 |
| 12 | Agricultural film | 1.28 | 1.35 | 1.60 | 1.41 |
| 13 | Television | 2.13 | 2.80 | 2.93 | 2.62 |
| | **Mean** | **1.48** | **1.72** | **1.97** | **1.72** |
| | F value = 27.061** | | | | |

information sources and rural families is fundamental for the growth and development and that more knowledge of this process will assist extension development planners in planning suitable communication strategies. This discussion reveals the importance of proper information source utilization at the farmers level.

The interpersonal as well as mass communication channels helped the farmers to upto date their knowledge regarding agricultural development and other related activities. It ensures timely delivery of relevant information to support tapioca growers. Hence this study was taken up in the tapioca predominant district of Salem in Tamil Nadu State in order to know the information sources utilisation behaviour of tapioca growers.

## Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in the tapioca predominant district of Salem in Tamil Nadu State. Attur taluk was purposively selected since it has the largest area under tapioca cultivation in Salem district. A total number of 120 tapioca growers (40 each from marginal, small and big farmer categories) were selected based on random sampling method. A well-structured and pretested interview schedule was used to collect the data. The collected data were properly analysed using statistical procedures and the results are tabulated.

## Results and Discussion

Unless and otherwise the respondents receive information from different sources *viz.,* institutional, non-institutional and media sources, their knowledge level and consequently their adoption level will be affected. So, it is necessary for any farmer to use as many sources as possible to get information. It is also necessary for any social researcher to study the sources utilised. The respondents information source utilisation behaviour was studied and the results obtained by way of mean score are presented in table 1.

The table 1 explained that majority of the tapioca growers considered Assistant Agricultural Officers (2.70) and Agricultural Officers (2.56) as their sources of information among the institutional sources.

The table 1 further explained that the major non-institutional sources for information were the friends (3.14), relatives (2.83), progressive farmers (2.63) and neighbours (2.57). The FDG convenors (2.38) and agricultural leaders (2.13) were also consulted to some extent.

Among the media sources, radio ranked first (2.76) and used widely by tapioca growers to get information. Television (2.62) and newspaper (2.48) were also utlilised considerably to get farm information.

Among the three categories of sources non-institutional sources were used more by the tapioca growers, followed by institutional and media sources. The table further revealed that the utilisation of all the three sources increased along with increase in farm size. All the three sources were utilised less by the marginal farmers than the big. The significant 'F' value shows that there existed significant difference between the three categories of farmers with respect to information sources utilisation.

It could therefore be concluded that Assistant Agricultural Officers (2.70) and Agricultural Officers (2.56) were the widely used institutional sources. Friends (3.14), relatives (2.83), progressive farmers (2.63) neighbours (2.57), FDG convenors (2.38) and agricultural leaders (2.13) were the important non-institutional sources. Radio (2.76) was the popular media for receiving farm information, closely followed by television (2.62) and newspaper (2.48). The use of non-institutional sources was more. The sources use increased along with the increase in the size of the farm.

This finding is in line with the findings of Nirmaladevi, (1997); Payal Gogia, (1999) and Janakirani, (1999).

## Conclusion

From the study it could be concluded that majority of the tapioca growers considered the Assistant Agricultural Officers and Agriculture Officers as their preferred institutional sources of information. Their major non-institutional sources used were friends, relatives, progressive farmers and neighbours. Radio was the popular media to tapioca growers for receiving farm information closely followed by television and newspaper.

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