

Original Research Article

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## Socio Economic Characteristics of Farm Publications Reader Farmers and their Association with Reading Habit

G. Chaitra\*, K. Amaresh Kumar and D. Shashikala Bai

Department of Agricultural Extension, College of Agriculture, University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, Shivamogga - 577225, Karnataka, India

\*Corresponding author

### ABSTRACT

According to the census of India 2011, there has been substantial increase in the literacy rate from 64.83 per cent in 2001 to 74.04 per cent in 2011. The present literacy level in Karnataka, which stands at 75.36 per cent, it implies three-fourth of the population can make use of the printed media. Even there is substantial increase in the literacy level among rural mass. Hence, to know the reading and understandability of agricultural information through different farm publications the present study attempts to examine the personal and socio-economic characteristics of different farm publications reader farmers and their association with reading habit. The study was conducted in Dakshina Kannada and Dharwad districts of Karnataka State. In these districts, the three farm publications viz., newspapers, farm magazines and leaflet/folders were selected to analyze reading analysis of the reader farmers. Primary data for the study was collected through a sample of 120 reader farmers in 8 villages in the study area. Simple random sampling procedure was used in collecting the data. The findings of the study revealed that, majority of the respondents 65.00 per cent were having 10-20 years of farming Experience. Whereas, 20.00 per cent of the farmers belonging to more than 20 years of Farming experience. Study also revealed that 35.00 per cent of the respondents were educated up to middle school. Association of profile characteristics of reader farmers with reading habit indicated that out of 11 independent variables such as farmers age, education, land holding, farming experience, annual income, cosmopolitaness, extension agency contact and extension participation exhibited significant relationship with their dependent variable reading habit and innovative proneness, mass media participation and political participation had exhibited non significant relationship with reading habits of the respondents towards farm publications.

#### Keywords

Education, Farming experience, Extension participation, Reading habits

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## **Introduction**

India's economy continues to be predicting upon the agriculture sector and the situation is not likely to change in the near future. Agriculture supports 58 per cent of the population, as against more than 75 per cent at the time of independence. Many new technologies or improved practices are being developed through location specific agricultural research. Constant flow of information from research system to extension system and there on to the farmers is necessary for rapid agricultural development. Communication of scientific information plays a vital role in the development of agriculture. The Print media serves as an important and a potential source of information to the farmers in terms of accuracy, preservability, timeliness and understanding of the message by the reader farmers. The usage of print media is wider. Since the printed material is available to read at their own place and with wide range of information according to their needs.

Since, the phenomenon of mass media exposure may be cumulative i.e., the farm publication subscribers may also be listening to radio, seeing television and using innovative technologies like mobile, internet etc. Their reading habit may differ according to their personal characteristics like age, education and other socio-economic status. Hence it was considered essential to investigate these aspects with reference to farm publication reading farmers. An attempt has been made to assess the reading habit of the farmers about the agricultural information published in farm publications.

## **Materials and Methods**

The study was conducted in Dakshina Kannada and Dharwad districts of Karnataka State. In these districts, the three leading farm publications were selected to analyze reading

analysis of the reader farmers. These districts were selected purposively because of farm magazine, Adike Patrike is published in Dakshina Kannada district and Krishi Munnade is published in Dharwad district. Hence, it is believed that the reader farmers of these farm journals are considerably more in the selected districts. The second reason was that there were highest literates in these two districts (Census report, 2011). The other farm publications like Kannada daily newspapers and leaflets/folders were also considered to know the reading habit of the farmers in these two districts. With respect to Newspapers, Udayavani and Samyukta Karnataka papers were selected because these two papers had highest circulation of the corresponding selected districts. Further leaflets/folders published by Farm Universities, Development Departments, NGO's, Input agencies were also considered for the study.

Two talukas in each district were selected based on the literacy level. Under each taluka 2 villages were selected with a minimum of 5 km and maximum of 15km radius from the taluk headquarters where 15 Kannada farm publication reader farmers were randomly selected from each village.

## **Selection of the population**

All the reader farmers of the selected Kannada farm publications of Dakshina Kannada and Dharwad district were constituted as population of the study.

## **Selection of respondents**

From each village, fifteen farmers were selected by using simple random sampling technique. Thus 120 reader farmers were selected for the study.

The result of the Table 1(a) indicates that 58.30 per cent reader farmers belonged to

middle age group. This may be due to the reason that middle and old aged farmers are generally more experienced in farming than young farmers so they try to seek innovative technologies to improve their farming practice which can save time and make their farming easy. They are eager to know new and additional information for exploring their skills which they already got by farming experience to enhance their family life.

It could be seen from the Table 1(b) that 35.00 per cent of the respondents were educated up to middle school because the age group was almost more than 35 years where in earlier days the education level of farmers was comparatively low and most of them involved in agriculture as major and bread winning profession. Hence, majority of the farmers were educated till middle school or less than that.

The data in Table 1(c) depicts that majority 33.30 per cent and 31.70 per cent of the respondents were small and medium farmers in the study area. The tendency of owning of land in Indian agriculture is that 80.00 per cent of the farmers are small and marginal land holders, even the same results were depicted in the study also. Within the available land for cultivation the farmers were able to cultivate crops of their choice.

From the Table 1(d) it was clear that majority 65.00 per cent of the reader farmers had 10 - 20 years of farming experience.

The reasons might be most of the farmers were got good and high experience in farming was good move in their profession as cultivators. Even 20.00 per cent of the respondents had experience of more than 20 years in farming which depicts the proficiency and extent of involvement in their occupation and not diverted to other occupations.

The data presented in Table 1(e) pointed that 55.00 per cent of the reader farmers belonged to high income category followed by 40.80 per cent of farmers had medium annual income in the study area. The reason may be that most of the respondents had adopted plantation crops and other cash crops which gives high returns from the farming.

The data presented in Table 1(e) pointed that 55.00 per cent of the reader farmers belonged to high income category followed by 40.80 per cent of farmers had medium annual income in the study area. The reason may be that most of the respondents had adopted plantation crops and other cash crops which gives high returns from the farming.

The finding from the Table 1(f) indicates that majority 51.67 per cent of the respondents belonged to medium cosmopolitaness. Whereas 26.67 per cent of them had high cosmopolitaness. The reason may be due to as most of the respondents belonged to villages near to urban area they might be visiting to nearby towns for various reasons like entertainment, religious satisfaction, gaining information and purchase of inputs etc., due to above reason respondents had medium to high cosmopolitaness.

The findings of the table 1(g) showed that majority 39.17 per cent of the respondents had medium innovative proneness, while 35.83 per cent of the respondents had high innovative proneness. The reason for medium and high innovative proneness of the farmers was that most of them had exposure on various media and had good contact in the society with various institutions. It is obvious that the individual who had more exposure in different dimensions in his life then his ideology, his innovativeness and skill components are comparatively better. Due to all these characters the respondents of study area have medium to high innovative proneness.

It was evident from Table 1(h) that majority 45.00 per cent of reader farmers had medium level of extension agency contact followed by low extension agency contact (32.50%). The reason for medium extension agency contact might be that the farmers were dependent to obtain right information about availability of inputs and other relevant agriculture information so they need support from department personnel for aforesaid benefits. That might be the reason the respondents fall in the category of medium extension agency contact.

Further Table 1(i) indicates information about mass media participation of the respondents. Majority 35.00 per cent of the respondents and 34.17 per cent of respondents had low and medium mass media participation.

The study considered to assess the mass media participation in radio and TV only. Though radio and TV plays important role in dissemination of agriculture information here the influence of other media such as internet, mobile, social networking groups also played pivotal role in sharing the information among the farmers. Hence, majority of the farmers might not been relay on radio and TV this might be the reason that the respondents had low and medium mass media participation.

The data in the Table 1(j) depicted that majority 51.67 per cent of respondents had medium level of extension participation followed by low level of extension participation (27.50%). The probable reason for medium and low extension participation of the respondents may be that the awareness about organization of extension programmes like training programmes, demonstrations, krishimelas, field days, campaigns etc., were not aware by the farmers and they might not know the usefulness of these extension activities.

It could be deduced from the Table 1(k) that majority 58.34 per cent of the respondents had low political participation, the reason for this is due to that the respondents were mainly small and marginal farmers, these farmers socio economically not well off and due to poor resources they show less importance in participation in organizational activities. Secondly the respondents might not understood the benefits obtained from social/political organizations. Hence the respondents had low political participation.

Table 2 reveals the association between profile characteristics of the farmers and their reading habit.

There was a significant association between farmers age and their reading habit. The hypothesis that there was association between reading habit and farmers age was accepted. The age is a crucial factor to read information in different sources. The farmers of all age groups get the information from different sources of print media even same tendency was observed in Kannada farm publications.

There was a significant association between farmers education and their reading habit. The probable reason for association between the reading habit and farmers education might be that the formal education for the individual makes improve upon on various aspects of their life particularly increasing on knowledge, attitude and skill. Higher the education leads to higher the quality in delivering the things. Even the farmers acceptance of information is observed based on the reading habit which had greater influence on acquiring knowledge that might be the reason education showed a significant association with their reading habit.

There was a significant association between farmers landholding and their reading habit. Land is a important factor for cultivation of crops. Higher land holding leads farmers to

increase in their socio economic status, it also influences on quality of life. Based on economic status farmers might have subscribed more number of farm publications to acquire knowledge and to adopt in their land. Further, study showed that there was a significant association between farmers

farming experience and their reading habit. The farming experience of the farmers always lead better practices in the agriculture. When the experience of the individual increases his competency in delivering goods and services will be accurate. Even the same tendency was observed in the farming experience.

**Table.1** Profile characteristics of Kannada farm publication reader farmers  
(n=120)

Sl. No.	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>1(a)</b>	<b>Age</b>		
	Young (< 30 years)	00	0.00
	Middle(31 - 55 years)	70	58.30
	Old (> 55 years)	50	41.70
<b>1(b)</b>	<b>Education</b>		
	Illiterate	6	5.00
	Primary school	32	26.70
	Middle school	42	35.00
	High school	22	18.30
	P.U.C	6	5.00
	Graduate	9	7.50
	Post graduate	3	2.50
<b>1(c)</b>	<b>Land holding</b>		
	Marginal farmers (Up to 2.50 acres)	8	6.70
	Small farmers (2.51 - 5.00 acres)	40	33.30
	Medium farmers (5.01 - 10.00 acres)	38	31.70
	Big farmers (more than10 acres)	34	28.30
<b>1(d)</b>	<b>Farming experience</b>		
	< 10 years of experience	18	15.00
	10 - 20 years of experience	78	65.00
	> 20 years of experience	24	20.00

**Table.1** continued

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>1(e)</b>	<b>Annual income</b>		
	Low (Up to 60, 000)	5	4.20
	Medium (60,000 - 1.2 lakh)	49	40.80
	High (> 1.2 lakh)	66	55.00
<b>1(f)</b>	<b>Cosmopolitaness</b>		
	Low (< 2.96)	26	21.66
	Medium (2.96 – 3.82)	62	51.66
	High (> 3.82)	32	26.66
		<b>Mean = 2.966</b>	<b>S.D. = 0.859</b>
<b>1(g)</b>	<b>Innovative proneness</b>		
	Low (< 17.66)	30	25.00
	Medium (17.66 - 19.90)	47	39.16
	High (> 19.90 )	43	35.83
		<b>Mean = 18.78</b>	<b>S.D. = 2.24</b>
<b>1(h)</b>	<b>Extension agency contact</b>		
	Low (< 7.28)	39	32.50
	Medium (7.28 - 9.2)	54	45.00
	High (> 9.2)	27	22.50
		<b>Mean = 8.24</b>	<b>S.D. = 1.92</b>
<b>1(i)</b>	<b>Mass media participation</b>		
	Low (< 5.42)	42	35.00
	Medium (5.42 - 8.20)	41	34.16
	High (> 8.20)	37	30.83
		<b>Mean = 6.80</b>	<b>S.D. = 2.77</b>
<b>1(j)</b>	<b>Extension participation</b>		
	Low (< 2.63 )	33	27.50
	Medium (2.63 - 4.20 )	62	51.66
	High (> 4.20 )	25	20.83
		<b>Mean = 3.41</b>	<b>S.D. = 1.57</b>
<b>1(k)</b>	<b>Political participation</b>		
	Low(< 1.40)	70	58.33
	Medium(1.40 - 3.30)	22	18.33
	High(> 3.30)	28	23.33
		<b>Mean = 2.33</b>	<b>S.D. = 1.86</b>

**Table.2** Association between reading habit with profile characteristics of the reader farmers  
(n = 120)

Categories	Chi-square values
Age	13.864**
Education	34.124**
Land Holding	44.859**
Farming Experience	14.059**
Annual Income	20.717**
Cosmopolitaness	14.971**
Innovative Proneness	5.298NS
Extension Agency Contact	14.771**
Mass media Participation	7.362NS
Extension Participation	16.872**
Political Participation	2.528NS

\*significant at 5% level of significance,  
 \*\*Significant at 1% level of significance,  
 NS-Non-significant

There was a significant association between farmers annual income and their reading habit of Kannada farm publications. The economically well off persons always eager to acquire many things in society and their socio economic status is also in good condition so they prefer to spend money on purchase of newspapers and farm magazines which play major role in acquiring knowledge to disseminate among the other farmers.

There was a significant association between farmers cosmopolitaness and their reading habit. The reason for this was may be that the frequent visits of the farmers to near by towns helps to establish network in the society which led to acquisition of many new things. Due to this reason reading habit of farmers was showed association with their cosmopolitaness. There was a significant association between farmers extension agency contact and their reading habit. Among many

extension contacts few of them might have helped the farmers to solve their problems in agriculture and related aspects with an aim to improve their agriculture activities and to increase their income level. Hence, these factors associated with the reading habit of the respondents.

There was a significant association between farmers extension participation and their reading habit. The reason for this might be that the extension activities play major roles in imparting new things among farmers because in krishimela, exhibitions, campaigns etc., huge people come together to know the information about agriculture. The same trend is in demonstrations and training programmes with limited number of farmers these extension activities might gave a clear cut understanding of the new things. This might be the reason the findings of the study observed that the significant association

between reading habit of the farm publication reader farmers and their extension participation.

Among the various mass media, print medium particularly farm publications play an important role, where literacy level is relatively high. Farm publications have become very powerful in communication of agricultural messages in Karnataka, with wider readership status and a variety of contents including development messages.

In this context the present study was attempted to know the association of reading habit of farmers with their socio economic characteristics. Since most of the socio-economic characteristics were associated with reading habit, publication agencies need to take care and consider all these characteristics and publish information accordingly to the targeted audience. Thus, it shows a greater importance of socio economic characteristics of reader farmers which indirectly influence

on their reading habit.

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