

Information Needs of the Rural Farmers in Kurunegala District in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Information is considered as a fundamental resource for the human and their education and other activities including agriculture. However, presently in Sri Lanka there is an ongoing problem with farmers' up-to-date knowledge on agriculture which affects badly on their agricultural products. Hence, his study aimed to investigate the information needs especially agricultural information needs of the rural farmers in Sri Lanka.

This study employed qualitative research methodology and used survey method as a research method. Cluster sampling method has been used to select a study sample which included 100 farmers who lives in Walpothwewa, Dambukele, Weerapokuna, Puwakgahakadawala, Galgoda and Kinyama in Bingiriya secretariat division in Kurunegala district. Primary data for this study were collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. How farmers use different sources of information to fulfill their information needs are also observed by the researcher.

This study found that farmers require various types of agricultural information. They are information about varieties of new seeds, pesticide management, livestock management, diseases, and fertility of soil. This study further identified that the rural farmers used some of the common sources of agricultural information such as television, Radio, Newspaper, Leaflet, Agricultural exhibitions and mobile apps to fulfill their information needs. Based on the study findings, it is confirmed that there is a huge demand for updated agricultural information for the rural agricultural community in Sri Lanka. However, due to the lack of relationships between farmers and agricultural officers, farmers not satisfied with getting information via agricultural officers and other relevant authorities.

This study recommended that government should take necessary step to improve farmers' information seeking behavior by conducting workshop, lectures, and active agricultural societies. This study further suggested that elect efficient and talent officials and thereby develop good relationship with farmers to provide relevant information when necessary. Moreover, electronic media can also play a vital role for fulfilling agricultural information needs rural farmers in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Information needs, Rural Famers, Agriculture, Information Sources.*