CHAPTER III
INFORMATION USE AND TRANSFER:
Theoretical aspects

3.1 INTRODUCTION

India is a country of many contrasts and contradictions. One of its outstanding features for ages has been that two-thirds of its population live in rural areas and their subsistence comes from agriculture. Even today, in spite of increasing industrialization, a majority of people are occupied with agriculture.

Ours is a highly stratified and varied pattern of society. Many socio-economic factors influence development and for this purpose society needs a variety of resources, and also better utilisation of available resources both natural and manmade. The integrated use of these resources should be directed towards achieving the object of a better quality of life.

The natural resources, land, water and minerals have to be exploited. To make better use of these resources for the benefit of mankind, another inherent manmade resource is becoming equally important to the entire world. That manmade resource is information.
The word information includes not only facts and data, but also ideas and products of man's creative endeavours. The information may be preserved and transferred through different media, such as, print media (books, journals, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, brochures etc.) and non-print media (TV, radio, film, video cassettes etc.).

The information in these media is primarily generated by the Universities and Research Institutions that are engaged in agricultural education, training and research. It is transferred through different communication channels, by print or non-print media. Information generated by various academic and research activities gets diffused to end users through the scientific community and through government officials working on different levels. In this communication process, the source of information gets transformed either into a print medium or a non-print one.

There are three types of recipients of information. First, from one scientist to another, second, from scientist to government official and finally to the farmer (end-user) through the village level worker. The village level worker will choose the suitable media appropriate to the level and capability of the end user recipient. Here the role of a library is very limited. As major part of the rural population is illiterate, the transfer of technology through information is a difficult task. It has to be transferred in the mode and medium acceptable to this category of people.
In the last two decades, India saw substantial growth in the knowledge of agriculture science and technology and also its implementation in improving methods of cultivation. The benefit of this new emerging body of knowledge can, however, be realised only if it is shared with all farmers. Those farmers who do not have access to new information must necessarily rely on traditional practices and thereby remain where they are without any chance of progress.

In order to accomplish desirable changes at all levels and uniformly among all farmers, an effective information communication system is very essential. This assumption sounds ideal, but it is not easy to accomplish it. Every farmer desires progress and change, but his social and economic conditions do not enable him to do so. The communication systems, therefore, should cover not only information on innovations, but also to bring a behavioural change in those who find it difficult to adapt themselves to change. The developing countries, have launched programmes of planned change, and also given greater importance to the effective communication of technological information to the farmers. This communication system should also be supplemented by other elements, which will encourage every farmer to accept changes, irrespective of his social or economic situation.

Several channels or methods of communication are available to the disseminators for communicating new ideas. They include:
1. Face-to-face or interpersonal communication,
2. Group communication,
3. Print communication, and

It may be stated that because of differences in acceptance levels of individual farmers, a single channel of communication is not effective. The statement by Rogers (1974)¹ commenting on print media may be quoted here:

"Annual report of change agencies tell of thousands of bulletins produced and/or distributed, dozens of radio programme aired, and hundred of clients attending local meetings, but little or nothing is said about what effect these messages had in securing adoption of innovations. The large volume error is a broadside approach in that many messages are produced, with the assumption that some of them may have some effect on somebody. It is an extremely inefficient approach."

However, the relative effectiveness of these methods particularly in combination is also not very well known. But radio, television, films and print media are the important mass media channels employed in promoting new practices for rural development. These channels are said to be more effective when combined with interpersonal communication. Supporting this view, Gajapati et al (1977)² made the
following observation in respect of effectiveness of channels in combination:

"To achieve high production farmers will have to master new skills and learn to manage and manipulate various inputs. This is possible only, if there is a sound communication strategy which would effectively and quickly disseminate the latest technology to the farming community and influence the individual farmers in adopting it, and combination of various communication channels is necessary so that the various agricultural innovations could reach all categories of farmers without loss of time".

So far one component of communication channel, objectively the mass communication, is examined as disseminator of innovative information. There is also a system of communication of scientific ideas, agricultural and/or others.

There are different ways of information communication or information transfer. They are:

1. System Oriented,
2. Source Oriented,
3. Channel Oriented, and
4. Production Oriented.
In the earlier discussion, the use of channel-oriented information transfer is considered primarily through mass communication channels.

The information transfer chain, on the other hand, depicts how information flows from generator to recipient. For example, the diagram below shows the communication between two scientists in the process of transfer of information.

Another effective way of information transfer is the system-oriented one in which several components of information system like libraries and documentation centres are also used in the communication of information.
An integrated view of information transfer in agriculture sector particularly to farmers can be visualised as in the diagram below:

Diagram - 2

This chain emphasises communication where different channels are employed. Each one has a role in the communication of information. A library is one of the components of information system, and is concerned in the process of communication of new scientific idea as well as in communication of new ideas in agricultural sciences and technology.

Diagram No.1 given above, shows the communication of scientific ideas from one scientist to another and this can be redesigned in the context of communication of new ideas.
of innovations in agriculture from scientist to farmers. The system components will also vary accordingly. The chain (diagram 1) can be slightly altered and redrawn, incorporating agricultural information and farmer as an end user (see diagram 3).

![Diagram 3](attachment:diagram3.png)

After examining the effectiveness of mass communication media, we may now consider the effectiveness of the channel, namely, the library.

3.2 LIBRARY A COMMUNICATION MEDIA

A library is a store-house of knowledge, and it provides information through a variety of collections of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, audio-visual materials, etc. It serves as an access point to facilitate the use of information. It has proved to be a
truly flexible institution, capable of tailoring its service according to the needs of the community.

As is well known, libraries are categorised as:

3.2.1. Academic library
3.2.2. Special library
3.2.3. Public library

A brief description, structure and functions of each category are mentioned below:

3.2.1. Academic Libraries

Academic libraries comprise of the libraries of schools, colleges, universities and similar other educational institutions serving the academic community. They differ in purpose, collection, service and size from that of special and public libraries. The main goal of an academic library is to provide reading materials to students, teachers and research scholars for fulfilment of curriculum requirements and promotion of study and research.

Functions:

i. To provide reading and reference materials to supplement class-room instruction,

ii. To encourage students to use books independently,

iii. To support formal education,

iv. To provide technical and specialised study materials

v. To keep information about the latest development for the faculty members, and

vi. To provide research materials needed for individual faculty members.
3.2.2 Special Libraries:

Special libraries are established to serve the specialist or the scientific community of research organisations. Their collection is limited to specific subjects or group of allied subjects. The forms of reading materials are also in special formats.

Functions:

1. Drawing up plans and adoption of programmes to achieve the objectives of the organisation,

ii. Acquiring library materials that would respond to the information requirement of the organisation,

iii. Organising and storing the acquired material properly to facilitate quick, exhaustive and pin pointed reference, and

iv. To provide specialised service like SDI, CAS, indexing and abstracting service etc.

3.2.3 Public Libraries

In a modern society, the public library is considered an indispensible part of our social, economic and cultural life. It is the repository of human knowledge of the past and present in the form of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, brochures, maps, manuscripts, pictures, film etc., which are organised for use by people. It is for the public, by the public and of the public. A public library is for all, it is freely open to every person irrespective of caste, class, creed, age, sex etc., and thus its clientele includes people from all walks of life who may be literate and even the illiterate.
Functions:

i. To act as a community centre,

ii. To be a meeting place to commemorate a public event,

iii. To be a centre for socially useful and cultural activities and discussion of current topics,

iv. To the development of co-operative cultural experience and democratic living,

v. To act as an agency of informal adult education,

vi. To act as an extension agency through popular talks and lectures, film shows and concerts,

vii. To provide all its resources free from all physical barriers,

viii. To reflect all the present and potential needs of the community,

ix. To be a centre to support formal school and college education,

x. To be a centre to develop reading habits, and

xi. To be a centre for developing cultural and spiritual aspects.

After mentioning the various kinds of libraries and their purposes, I have selected the public library for a detailed study. The public library not only provides informative material stored on its shelves, but can serve to facilitate the communication of information in a form different from its original so as to facilitate its use.

Expansion of the communication spectrum in libraries from print to audio-visual and other means of communication will certainly bring about changes in library services and also create an impact of libraries as a transmitter of information through different channels of communication.
As described earlier, the public library system is more suitable to transfer new knowledge in agriculture to grass root level or to the end user. So the emphasis on public libraries is more than on academic or special libraries.

The reason for involving a public library in this task is its wide network of libraries in cities and rural areas. The public library network as existing in many states as a result of public library legislation is highly useful in collecting information and passing it on to farmers, to put it into practice. For example the State of Karnataka has a good public library system which is the result of the implementation of the Karnataka Public Libraries Act, 1965 in 1966. The Act provides for the establishment and maintenance of public libraries and organisation of comprehensive rural and urban library services. A picture of the public library network as it exists in Karnataka state is presented here.

So far the department of public libraries has established libraries on different levels catering to the needs of different communities. They are as follows:

1. State Central Library 1
2. City Central Libraries 11
3. District Central Libraries 20
4. Public Technical Library 1
5. Branch Libraries 334
6. Mandal Central Libraries 451
7. Service Stations 150
8. Book Delivery Stations 300
9. Mobile Library units 8
10. Provides grants to aided libraries 40
11. Rajaram Mohan Roy Library Foundation Centres 1922
12. Hospital and Jail Libraries 23
13. Other libraries 52

Total 3313
So appropriate library series in this network of libraries would be used as effective channels of information communication for the said purpose/programmes.

Hence, different channels of communications are examined - from print and non-print media to libraries - to meet the every day requirements of the farmer in respect of information for his day-to-day problems and also for long-term requirements in farming.

The two concrete channels of communication to transfer information to the farmer have been envisaged as mass media and public library system in general. However, villages being small and compact in size and complexity, the person-to-person interaction does take place more often than in cities or in an urban environment. Such person-to-person interaction may be between neighbourhood or between farmer and village level worker.

3.3. GROUP DISCUSSION

Lastly, group discussion is another means of transfer of agricultural information. This may take place on the occasion of fairs, festivals, and in places where people usually gather in a village etc. In these places usually discussion will take place among the group of people in respect of improved seeds, fertilizers, new crops, improved irrigation facility, new crop disease, price of commodity and problems faced in day-to-day activities. They share their thoughts or ideas about any problem they may have.
The above mentioned components meet the agricultural information needs of farmers, but they are not fully satisfied with the present system of information communication. This has raised a doubt whether these systems are effectively transferring the agricultural information. It is also worthwhile to see whether a single channel can meet all the requirements of farmers or by a group of components. In this regard, Rogers and Svenning (1969) argued that the introduction of technological innovations among peasants in less developed nations on a mass basis would seem to be most effectively brought about by mass media channels coupled with interpersonal communication.

Jain (1971) also emphasised that public community was more influential in listening plus discussion group than in the listening group without discussion.

Hence, after assessing the past and present facts and figures, it is worthwhile to integrate all the four communication channels for effective dissemination of information to the farmers. If one channel fails, another can supplement it. It means that if print media fails to transfer agricultural information to the farmers, this group of people can be served by other channels either through non-print media or through personal communication. Hence, all these problems prompted the researcher to undertake an analytical study to assess the effective means of communication media for transfer of agriculture information.
REFERENCES:


