



Evaluation of information and advisory support received by the farmers in Jaffna, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Jaffna is one of the main agricultural districts in the Northern Province, Sri Lanka. Farmers in this district rely on traditional practices and experience gained from previous generation. Advisory support and information with new technologies assist farmers to increase the production and get high income from their cultivation. Present investigation was made to evaluate the advisory support and information received by the farmers in Jaffna. Primary data and secondary data was collected by using structured questionnaire and interviews during the period from August 2014 to June 2015. All the results were analyzed by using SPSS and Microsoft excel. The results revealed that awareness about the advisory support is low when compared to farmers who know about the services. Mass media played considerable role to give the information for farmers. Among the mass media newspaper scored maximum response which is observed as 96.77%. Both government and non - governmental organizations gave the services on production and protection techniques. But the time constraint and as they are doing traditional farming were limited to access these information. Even though, strong positive correlation was observed between awareness and the income. This study ensures that effective advisory support and information make the farmers towards to do the farming with appropriate knowledge.

Key words: Advisory support, farmers, income, mass media, Jaffna, newspaper

INTRODUCTION

Jaffna is located in the North tip of Sri Lanka at a longitude of 79°45'–80° 20' and east latitude of 9°30'–9°50' with the population of 614,540. The livelihood of public of Jaffna district mainly depends on agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing which play a crucial role to the gross production of Jaffna [1].

The climate of Jaffna is decided by the monsoon that forms a wet and dry season in the District. The major rainy season occurs during the North East monsoons from October to December and the minor rainy season occurs during the South West monsoon in April and May. The period between the South West Monsoon and the North East Monsoon is the dry season extending from June to September. The average rainfall is 1300mm but is highly variable, spanning a range of 630mm to 1780mm and the average temperature is 28°C.

Well drained and high productive calcic red yellow latasol and red yellow latasol soil types are found in central areas (60,000Ha). Alkaline saline soil and regasol are found in coastal areas (26000Ha) and alluvial soil is in Valukai Aru area (10000Ha). Tile depth of soil varies from 90cm- 150cm. This different soil types offer scope for cultivation of exotic as well as local crops [1].

The farming in Jaffna is commonly characterized by production of food, cash and oil crops and integrated livestock rearing as of the favourable soil and climatic conditions, the production has consistently been of high intensity and good yields. But on the other hand injudicible chemical pesticides and fertilizer applications become as the top most

key threat to human and environment. Due to this, most of the farming communities are affected by threatful diseases like cancer and renal failure. Moreover, ground water is polluted with nitrate nitrogen that comes out from the excess application of urea in the agro wells of Jaffna. Towards better awareness of safe farming with due consideration of the environment especially the water and food produced, farmers' education is an essential prerequisite [2].

Education is a powerful tool changing the mindset of people at all level. In this fast growing world, new technologies, novel ideas and innovations are driving the people towards the high outcome based and improved economic development of the country [3]. In case of farming, rural communities are mostly involved and their education level is very poor. The education we refer here has to be explanatory, practicable and yield oriented [4]. Otherwise they will not adapt it at all.

Present study investigates the evaluation of information and advisory support received by farmers in Jaffna. That will help to give recommendation regarding every farming practices and intelligent cultivation of crops with the good farming knowledge. This also will help to get maximum production with least cost.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study relies on quantitative and quantitative design of structured questionnaire and interviews. In order to meet the objectives primary and secondary data were collected.

Primary data

Primary data was obtained by structured questionnaire which is administrated to 250 farmers from different divisional secretariat in Jaffna district. In addition observation during the survey and the field experience also utilized to complement the questionnaire. Semi structured interviews employed to find out from organizations both government and private about the factors that affect their work in as far as encouraging farmers to participate in agriculture extension activities is concerned.

Secondary data

This was collected by using literature of respective organization who are giving the advisory support to the farmers and websites of information service providers in Jaffna.

Data analysis

Data was analyzed by using statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics cross tabulations and other SPSS applications that were found to be useful in achieving the study objective.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Qualitative information from the interviews and the survey show differentiated results on the advisory support received regarding farming. According to the farmers surveyed, 51.67% of the farmers have awareness about existence of advisory support services while 54.84% of farmers have none. Some other authors also denoted as farmers are passive receptors [6].

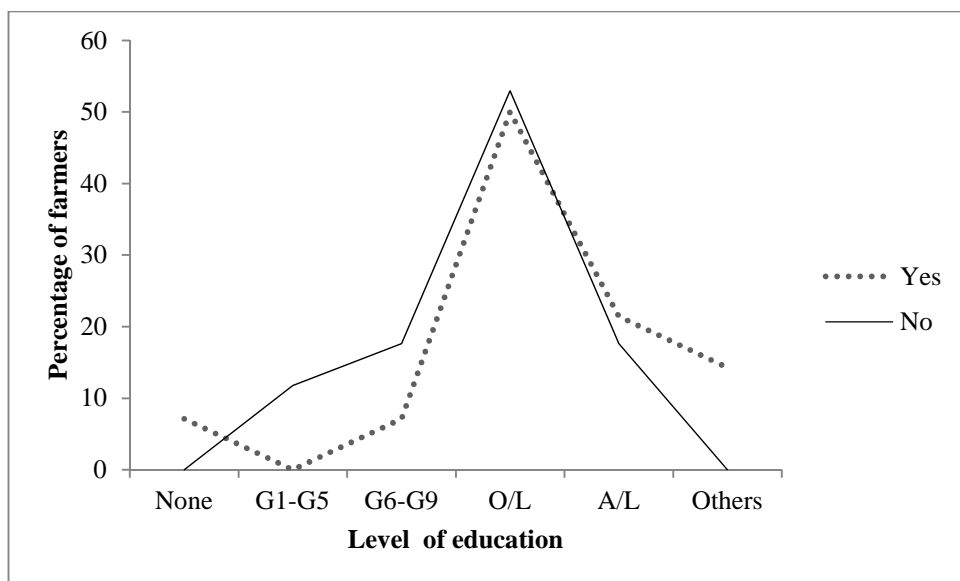


Fig. 1: Education level (Sri Lankan education system: Grade 1- 10, O/L - Ordinary level, A/L - Advanced level, Others – Diploma and Degree) of the farmers surveyed with their status of response.

As the figure 1 depicts both farmers who know and do not know about the existence of advisory services fall between G6-G9 and A/L education level and Most of the farmers who involved in the farming have been completed ordinary level (O/L) but comparatively equal half of the farmers do not aware about the advisory support services. Interestingly 7.14% of the farmers who do not have education level aware about the advisory support services available in Sri Lanka. This might be because of the interaction with other farmers and involvement in farmer association exists in their places. People who involve with the farming after they got degree and diploma have the comprehensive knowledge in farming practices and headed several training activities.

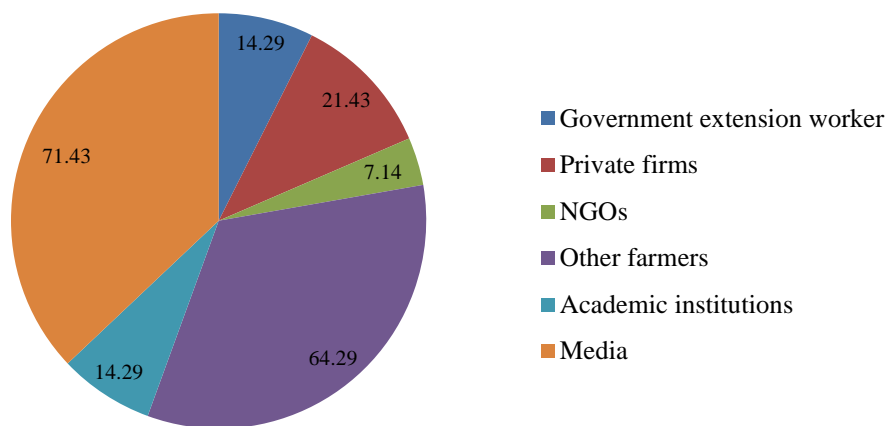


Fig.2: Source of advisory support and information received by the farmers in Jaffna given in percentage (%)

Most of the farmers received the information and advisory support from mass media which was calculated as 71.43%. Approximately persons who involve in the farming in Jaffna are came by traditionally and through the experience got from their parents and other surrounding farmers. This is proved by the results as 64.29% of the farmers obtained the information from other farmers which include management of inputs, application of fertilizers and pesticides, animal husbandry and pest management. Information related to new techniques, food processing, financial information, marketing and management, preservation and bee keeping are given by other government and non - governmental institutions [7-13].

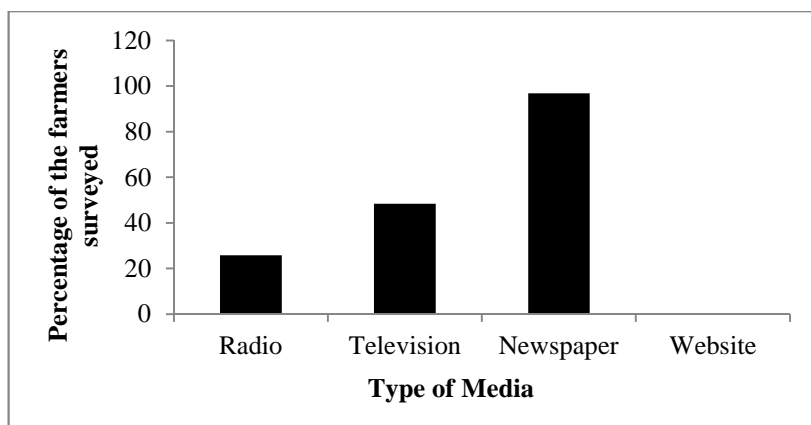


Fig. 3: Response of farmers surveyed to mass media

As the highest percentage of the farmers' response received from mass media, analyzed each source further to get the status of influence on the farmers' education. The highest percentage of the farmers responded to the newspaper while lowest accessible mass media is the website. This is because of the cheapest price, readability and the reliability towards the newspaper. 25.81% and 48.31% of the farmers were obtained agricultural related information from radio and television, respectively.

Table 1: Influence of each mass media available in Jaffna regarding advisory support for the farmers (Same letters are not differ significantly)

Media	Type	Percentage (%)
Radio	I	35.71 ^{bcd} ± 1.02
	II	0.00 ^e ± 2.06
	III	28.57 ^{cd} ± 2.34
	IV	14.29 ^{abcd} ± 3.74
	V	0.00 ^e ± 2.06
Television	I	7.14 ^{de} ± 1.04
	II	64.29 ^{abc} ± 4.98
	III	7.14 ^{de} ± 1.04
	IV	14.29 ^{abcd} ± 3.67
	V	14.29 ^{abcd} ± 3.67
Newspaper	I	78.57 ^{ab} ± 4.76
	II	100.00 ^a ± 3.47
	III	57.14 ^{ab} ± 2.01
	IV	14.29 ^{abcd} ± 3.67
	V	0.00 ^e ± 2.06

Results show that farmers mostly preferred particular type when compared to others in television and newspaper category significantly. Newspaper II was the maximum accessible and preferred by the farmers among all information providers. Some type in radio and television provided information to the farmers but accessibility was nil. This might be because of the less popularity among the farming community.

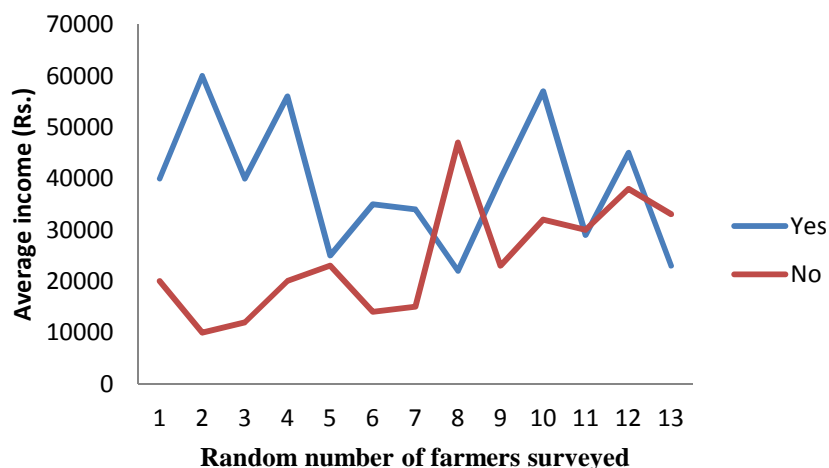


Fig. 4: Distribution pattern of average income of the farmers surveyed

Farmers aware about the advisory services were obtained higher income when compared to farmers who do not have the awareness regarding advisory services. There is positive correlation (0.89) between income and the status of awareness.

CONCLUSION

Most of the farmers in Jaffna rely on traditional practices and obtain information from the experience of past cultivation. Mass media play a substantial amount to provide advisory services. As the positive correlation observed between income and awareness, proper strategies need to be developed to trigger the farmers towards education.

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