STRATEGIC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT TO EMPOWER TRIBAL FARMERS OF KORAPUT

ABSTRACT

Information management to empower tribal farmers needs no emphasis. The problem has been communicating to tribal farmers over a period of time, as a result they remained beyond technological advancements. It is an established fact that unless and until their livelihood system is diversified to a remunerative one, they will continue to remain under poverty line.

With the above backdrop, the study was conducted in four villages of Koraput district with a randomized sample of 130 respondents. The sample villages were selected on the basis of Herfindahl index (HI) taking minimum and maximum value of HI as diversified village (DV) and non-diversified villages (NDV) respectively.

Results reveal that farmers of Diversified and non-diversified village differ in all aspects of socio-economic parameters except age and possession of animals. 15 types of combinations were found in the existing farming system. Significant difference was observed among DV and NDV with respect to area, yield and profit under crops and vegetables with no difference in case of animal component. Positive correlation was found between socio-economic status and levels of diversification.
The priority areas of information need were found to be information on market followed by input, capacity building, social development, technology on animal husbandry and technology on crops.

Irrespective of types of farmer informal sources are at the top with 70.06% of the respondents seeking farm information followed by mass media (31.71 %) and formal sources (31.44%). Irrespective of type of farmer, most preferred sources were found to be practising farmers, friends and neighbors, input dealer, extension worker and radio in order. As perceived by the tribal farmers, source of communication should be armed with local language, newness in approach and knowledge about technology. Channels should be action initiative, locally useable and reliable so as to be user friendly. The technology should ensure more profit, related to local need, practicable and based on their resources. Local congregation like market place, village level group discussion, festive congregation provide very good platform for exchange of ideas and can be explored for effective communication network in the tribal areas.

The communication strategy should consider important elements like types of farmer, existing farming system, stimulating forces of profit, technology and market with area of diversification like vegetable, cereals, pulses and chain of informal sources available in the tribal locality. The services of the practising farmers may be purposefully utilized to overcome language barrier, ensure practical demonstration of the technology and better exchange of ideas among the farming community.